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HARRY HARTLEY:

OR,

Social Science for the Workers.

BY

J. W. OVERTON.

"The chapter of accidents is the Bible of the fool."—*The Times*.

LONDON:

H. LEA, 22, WARWICK LANE.

1859.

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P R E F A C E .

COURTEOUS READER,—As an English workman, I have seen, with feelings of mingled gratitude and pain, the many efforts which are being made for the moral and intellectual improvement of the class to which I belong.

Deeply grateful that such efforts are made, I am greatly pained at their comparative want of success.

The motives which actuate our would-be benefactors of the middle class I know to be excellent, and above praise ; but their mode of application in most cases I believe to be the development of a great mistake. I have ever held that the workers must elevate themselves ; and that our

real, true, and good friends of the middle class must cease to look upon us as automata, to which they have to give life as well as motion: rather let them look upon us as the great misdirected power we really are. For instance, considered as a monetary power only, what an influence do we exert for evil or for good. The Church of Rome knows our value in this respect, and she acts as if she knew it; she is aware that if only half of the enormous sums of money which the working classes in this country annually waste in sensual indulgences were thrown into any other scale, that a great social change would be at once effected. God save us from Rome! for a Romish priesthood can and does fatten in lands where the peasantry are miserably poor: how much more, then, does she covet the wealth which is possessed by an industrious population like ours! How strenuous are her efforts to regain her supremacy over us before our ignorance is dispelled; how glad would she be to blind us with her degrading and damnable dogmas, before we reach that point of intellectual and religious cultivation which will

enable us to see through the tissue of lies which she would palm upon us for the truth !

I do not fear Rome, but I would lessen the number of her victims ; I would remove from her her last chance of success, in our ignorance and practical infidelity. An earnest wish to assist in the accomplishment of this object, and some other considerations, induced me to devote my leisure time to the production of this work, in which I have endeavoured to show the real condition of the skilled artisans of England ; convinced that if the enlightened class to which I appeal were but to concentrate their efforts on them in the way I have suggested, that all they so earnestly desire would soon follow.

One word more, and I have done. I wish our good friends of the class to which I have more than once alluded, to regard this book as the work of one who has availed himself of some of the many privileges which they have conferred upon the workers ; to regard it as the work of an individual among the masses who wishes to show to those who expend their time and money on

our improvement, that their efforts are not altogether without appreciation on the part of those they seek to benefit.

As to the story itself, while it must be always looked upon as the medium by which I have sought to convey a true representation of the real state of affairs among the artisans, at the same time must be understood to be founded on facts; every character therein being drawn from the life, though so far altered in name and situation as to render recognition on the part of the originals inoffensive, though far from impossible.

In the hope that the book will be found of some use to the true patriot and earnest Christian,

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR

HARRY HARTLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ASPIRANT.

OUR story has a classical opening scene. On a dismal afternoon in the winter of 185—, a few persons might be seen wandering about those parts of Westminster Abbey which have not been made a source of revenue by the dignitaries of a liberal ecclesiastical institution known as the Episcopalian Church.

Among these stragglers there was a tall, slim, half-set young man, whose corduroy trousers and greasy coat bespoke him a mechanic; his face was intelligent in expression, though his features were irregular and far from handsome; his eyes, a keen penetrating gray when interested or excited, just then were listless, sleepy, and dull;

his hair, long and light, was as innocent of pomade as a new-mown hayfield; his general appearance and demeanour were such as to produce the impression that he was a young man who would rather sit than stand, would rather lounge than sit, would rather lie than lounge, and would rather sleep than do anything; he looked like one whose guiding principle in life was never to make work scarce; and judging by all outward indications there could be little doubt that he acted up to his principle.

Such was Harry Hartley, the hero of our tale, or such he seemed to be, as he paced up and down the nave, throwing now and then an inquiring glance on all around him.

At last his attention was drawn by, and given unreservedly to, an old gentleman who held the hand of a little boy while he explained to him the meaning of an allegorical sculpture, at the same time interpreting the meaning of the Latin inscription beneath it.

Hartley drew near, listening attentively. When the old gentleman had concluded his explanatory remarks, he patted his little grandson on the head affectionately, saying, 'Now I do hope,

Arthur, that I shall never need to teach you the meaning of Latin verses any more.'

'You mean, grandpa, that you wish me soon to be able to translate them myself.'

'Precisely so, Arthur.'

'I'll try, grandpa,' cried the little boy, and his cheeks flushed with enthusiasm.

The young mechanic stood quite still in his semi-somnolent state, until he heard the little boy give utterance to this determination: then he hung his head and placed his hand upon his mouth, his eyes flashing and his right foot executing a fidgetty movement, as he gave the little fellow a look of admiration, not unmingled with envy; then turning on the bevelled heels of his well-worn boots, he walked rapidly away: nor did he stop until he reached that part of the abbey in which the week-day service is performed, the chapel at right angles with Poet's Corner. Just at that moment the clock struck three, the signal for the appearance of the officiating clergy and choristers, who came forth clad in white vestments, emblematic of a righteousness which no doubt was theirs. Hartley crossed the chapel, and stood watching

them as they took their places. We photograph a few thoughts which flitted through his brain, suggested as they were by the scene before him.

‘What a queer lot of supernumeraries, up to nothing! We are going to have the Benediction of the Poignards from the Huguenots, I suppose. Rather different from Beersheba chapel; all the same firm, I expect, only they are in the retail line. I’ve heard of the boy whistling his prayers, but never knew that parsons sang them before. I should like to hear that frosty-headed gentleman sing “The Wolf,” at our gaff. The fifteenth text in old Jones’s circular sermon says, “The Lord have mercy on me a sinner”—’

While pursuing this satirical line of silent criticism he had taken a seat, and seemed to listen very attentively to the reading and chanting for a short time; then rising from his seat he walked quietly towards the door, examining the monuments one by one on his way out. In due order he came to that of Shakespeare, and raising his eyes looked reverently on the face of the statue, then gradually dropped them from the face to

the scroll which it had in its hand, reading the words written thereon, beginning with—

‘The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces.’

While thus occupied his breast heaved with emotion, his lips were compressed, and there was a strange light in his eyes as he gave utterance in a suppressed mumble to the new feelings which fired his soul—feelings akin to inspiration and often mistaken for it. Raising his eyes again to the face of the statue, he poured forth his soul thus incoherently, addressing it as if it were a thing of life:—

‘I shall never be like thee, never have a tithe of thy genius, yet I feel something in me which makes me hope I may be better than I now am. I can at least realize thy thoughts, if I cannot produce the like. I will be intellectual—nay, I will be great! O ye great ones, if your spirits haunt this place! and Thou, O greatest of all! help me to—’

At this moment the voices of the choristers and the deep tones of the organ struck his ears as they conjointly performed or executed the music of the *Magnificat*—

'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For He hath regarded ——'

Hartley looked astonished: he stayed to hear no more, but walked quickly out of the abbey, and in less than a second of time was in the street. Perhaps he saw the contrast between his own sentiments and those of the good woman who is now by some curious theological arrangement one of the deities of the Romish Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE GAFF.

UNDER the influence of the intellectual impetus he had received, Hartley walked rapidly on, nor did he stop until he reached the Horse Guards. Here he stopped, and looking up at the clock, thus soliloquised:—‘Let me see: must meet Bessie to-night: new ballet at the gaff—must see that anyhow: make an excuse to Bessie. Almost too bad though, but then a fellow can’t always be with her. Too soon yet for either. I’ll sling myself into that coffee-house, and do a read.’ So saying he took the direction of the Strand, and while he journeys onward, we will, with a view to giving our readers a clearer insight into his character, examine the contents of his pockets.

In the pockets of a young workman’s week-day clothes, we usually expect to find not only the keys of his house-door and trunks, but also the

key to his taste : sometimes it is represented by a short pipe and a tobacco-box ; very frequently by a penny song-book or a number of a penny serial ; sometimes a pocket-book tells you that the owner is a patron of the turf, and that he keeps a book in a small way, and so on to French Lessons and Latin Grammars, and even to the Books of Euclid. Hartley's pockets contained the following articles, viz., about five shillings in silver and pence ; the current number of *Chambers's Journal*, carefully folded up ; a piece of clean white paper, on which a large number of words in three or four syllables, without any apparent connection with each other, were written, most of them being scientific names and technicalities of the ichthyosaurus and megatherium sort. Carefully hidden between the pages of the *Journal* there is a little note addressed to Mr. Hartley : it is written in a neat female hand, and reads thus :—

‘ DEAR HARRY,

‘ Your Bessie (as you call her) thinks she can meet you at the same time and place as usual. Mind you come now.

‘ I am your's very, what shall I say ?

‘ BESSIE CLEVELAND.’

While we are thus gathering an inkling of the present state of our hero's head and heart from these things, he has reached his destination, a coffee-house in a dark street leading out of the Strand. Having ordered some tea and bread and butter, he sat down, took up a newspaper and was soon lost in the perusal of the editor's remarks on passing events, only stopping once to ask for a pen and ink, with which to put down a few more long words on the piece of paper before mentioned, intending to consult his dictionary and find their meanings and pronunciations when he reached home.

Thus occupied, the hours passed speedily away until the time came when the gaff or penny theatre would be opened to the public. A casual glance at the clock at the back of the shop reminded him of this ; he instantly sprang to his feet, threw the newspaper over the back of the settle, gulped his tea down, now quite cold, then laying his bread and butter sandwich fashion, took it in one hand as he threw down the money with the other ; he then rushed out of the shop and was again in the street walking with the rapidity and ease of a trained pedestrian,

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eating as he went. He slackened his speed as he drew near the gaff, and again assumed the dilatory pace and slip-shod gait which seemed so much his own when in the abbey.

He was evidently not insensible to shame, for he stood aloof from the crowd—the crowd of young thieves and juvenile costermongers, lucifer sellers and errand boys, girls whose ages varied from eight to seventeen years, forming no inconsiderable portion of the sea of filth and vice which was surging against the door of a house with a shop-front, situated in one of the principal thoroughfares of the metropolis: the door opened: in they poured amidst yells and cat-calls and oaths of the most blasphemous description, a peculiar word-twisting being used to make them original and effective.

And now each one is using all his or her strength to get to the pay-box, where having placed a penny in front of a pigeon-hole cut in the boards they each receive in exchange a tin or paper ticket, which admits them into this hot-bed of crime. A woman usually receives the money at these places.

The theatre itself was capable of seating one

thousand persons, and when it is remembered that it was usually filled three times each night during the winter, some estimate may be formed of the influence which it exerted on the juvenile poor of the community. We may state that there are several places of this kind in the metropolis, which, if not so large, are in all other respects like the one which Hartley has entered. As that individual was picking his way across the forms in the pit of this temple of the Muses, he heard his name called by two well-known voices; affecting not to hear them he made his way to a seat in an obscure corner. The two young men who had thus claimed acquaintance with him were shop-mates of his. Supposing that he had not heard their salute, owing to the deafening noise made by the settling mass, one of them threw an apple, which struck Harry's head, thus compelling him to parley with them.

‘What cheer, Harry?’ bawled Tom Brown, ‘how are you fetching it?’

‘Oh, fine.’

‘Here’s a seat,’ cried Sam Walters, pointing to a vacant space between them.

‘Rather stop here, thank you;’ and suiting

the action to the word, he sat down, drew his cap over his eyes, folded his arms across his breast, and was to all outward appearances soon wrapped in a profound reverie.

‘Can’t make him out at all,’ said Tom to Sam, when Harry had taken his position; ‘won’t have any truck with us out of shop at no price lately; ain’t proud, neither, I don’t think.’

‘He proud! no!’ replied the other; ‘it ain’t in him, mate. I can’t make it out, neither. My old man says, and he can see as far as here and there a one, that he thinks there’s more in him nor we think for.’

‘Well, I don’t like the way he is cutting it lately, not as he ever did me no harm.’

‘Him do you any harm! not he: he’s the two ends of a good sort, he is.’

The band, which had been playing an overture consisting of selections from ‘street-music,’ now ceased. The curtain rose, disclosing a stage of considerable width and depth; a badly-painted wood-scene was ‘run on:’ after a minute’s pause a man attired in a very short waisted bob-tailed coat, chintz waistcoat, plush knee-breeches, blue stockings, indescribable shirt, and sugar-loaf hat,

worn at the back of a scratch-wig, came forward. His facial appearance was irresistibly comic,—a red nose tipped with blue stood out boldly from cheeks made white by the plentiful application of flour, while a burnt cork, skilfully applied, had given him a pair of Tipperary eyebrows, such as an admirer of the Hibernian type of peasant beauty would envy. As he approached the foot-lights he was hailed with every kind of demonstration of rude delight, while shouts for ‘County Jail,’ ‘The Ploughboy,’ ‘Freedom of Opinion,’ ‘Yarn a Crust,’ were heard from all parts of the crowded audience. Coming down close to the lights, he put his finger to his nose, and commenced singing, in a cracked voice and jerking style, a song commencing thus :—

‘ I thought when I first entered life
 By honesty to gain a name ;
 But mortal selfishness and strife
 Soon taught me a different game.’

After describing with great glee the way in which he had duped the kind Christian public in the character of a cadger, he gave the chorus—

‘ Dodges such as these I try,
 For gain a living all men must :
 ‘Honesty is all my eye,
 Anything to yarn a crust.’

He then went on to describe his adventures as a preacher, teetotal lecturer, strolling player, and showman. When he had finished this song he was rapturously applauded; and on obtaining an encore he sang another of a more immoral character than the first. It was of the narrative kind, seduction and an order of affiliation being the chief elements therein: this was followed by other songs by other singers, most of them so disgusting that even with our desire to place the plain unvarnished truth before our readers, we feel compelled to refrain from giving specimens of them. Suffice it to say, that when three-quarters of an hour had been spent in this way, a gentlemanly individual, whose manner gave unmistakable evidence of a hearty appreciation of the graces of 'the great Jullien bow,' came forward, and addressed the assemblage in the following terms:—

'Ladies and Gentlemen—I am requested by the management to return their most sincere thanks for the support which you have hitherto given them in their efforts to please. I have further to inform you that after the dance by Mademoiselle Tonenine, there will be presented for the first time here a new grand ballet d'action,

in which the whole of the talented artists engaged at this establishment will appear; it will be called *The Cave of Blood*, or *the Brigand of the Pyrenees*. This will conclude the present entertainment: there will be another house in a quarter of an hour, when there will be an entire change of performance.'

When he had concluded this speech, his body from its legs upwards assumed that peculiar curve which seems to belong exclusively to persons when bowing themselves out of 'the presence' on state occasions, and to authors, actors, and managers, who get a call before the curtain at the theatres.

As he went off he might have heard many expressions of regard for his mother uttered, coupled with an earnest wish to be informed as to the exact amount of maternal solioitude exhibited by that venerable lady, with special reference to his being then and there present. Others among the numerous auditory, less sentimental than the rest, contented themselves by making inquiries about his tradesmen, among whom none seemed to interest them so much as his hatter.

His departure was the signal for the band

to strike up the first tune of a medley dance ; a lovely girl came bounding on : she had not seen sixteen summers, and looked a mere child in her almost nuded state. A muslin body, with a skirt of three or four folds of the same material, about half a yard long, was the only clothing she wore, if we except the fleshings, which do not take away the appearance if they save the name of nakedness. She looked happy ; there was a smile of bewitching sweetness upon her pretty face : a coarse remark made by a brutish fellow in front reached her ears ; she blushed deeply, but danced on smiling as before. She was training for the opera ; it would not be always like this, she thought, as she threw herself into the most difficult poses.

The remarks of cattle-dealers on the animals they sold in old Smithfield on a market-day would have been models of refinement compared with the filthy observations which fell from the lips of these rough rude boys on the poor fragile beautiful little creature, who worked hard to amuse them—the sensuous brutes!—for a few minutes.

It is but fair to add that the poor child received the much-coveted meed of applause which

she so well deserved. As she jumped off the curtain fell.

Had there been a printed programme issued containing a description of the cast of characters who afterwards performed in the ballet it would have been something like this.

Karl, a young villager in love with Clotilde, with a propensity for attitudinising à la Mercury, afflicted with a palpitating heart, on the snow-white outer covering of which he always puts his hand. By a young man who has been used to the care of horses and understands a coal-waggon.

Herwinkendemeye, the comic miller, his friend, afflicted with paralysis, which makes him wink with his ear and wipe his nose on his coat-cuff. By a youth whose early years were passed between the sandwich-boards of an advertising shopkeeper.

Ludwig, the baron, all covered with jewels and gold, visited with the gout, and the possessor of a real pair of ventilating bluchers. The rival of Karl. By a young baker who hopes some day to eclipse all other mimes and mummers.

Oneofthewuster, the brigand of the cave; the dark man of the piece, who levies black mail

on all comers. The rival of the baron and Karl. By the scene-painter of the establishment, an enthusiast in art, who in his moments of confidential inebriety, boasts that he commenced life as a bug-blinder or whitewasher, afterwards a painter of ships in the London docks, now the artistic contemporary of Beverley and Gray. In his part he walks the stage like a cornet not used to his spurs.

Jacques Le Beau, the father of Clotilde, opposed to her union with Karl, on account of his (Jacques's) love of the baron's gold. Notwithstanding the dignified cognomen which we have bestowed upon him, the lads in the house insist on calling him Old Pop, from the fact that he is the purveyor of ginger-beer to the frequenters of the saloon. Subject to the lumbago, he never takes his hand from his back while on the boards.

Clotilde, loved by everybody, flirting with everybody, but really loving Karl—by Miss Marie Jones, or Mademoiselle Tonenine.

When we say that the curtain rose again, and that a set scene, consisting of a Swiss cottage, and a London water-butt, was exhibited, and that Clotilde was discovered knitting at the door of the

cottage, we think that we have said all we need say upon the matter. The least imaginative person could concoct a plot out of these materials. Of one thing we are certain, that it would be impossible to conceive anything more absurd in design, or more ludicrous in effect, than the one to which Hartley gave his undivided attention.

CHAPTER III.

EMMA AND BESSIE.

As Hartley passed out of the building he saw Tom and Sam engaged in conversation with two girls, they were sisters. Emma Adams, the elder of the two, was a wild, gipsy-looking girl, with dark flashing eyes and wavy black hair; her dress, gay in make, and of light and showy materials, revealed a faultless outline, though it seemed more fit to be worn in July than November.

Her sister, a plainer and less attractive girl, had light hair and blue eyes; her dress was of plain make and warm materials. Jane's face was expressive of serious thought, while Emma's spoke only of animation and gaiety. Hartley tried to avoid them and escape their notice, but this was not to be, for the gipsy girl came running up, and thrusting her arm under his, pulled him with

some little force to where the others were standing. Finding no way of escape, he immediately opened the conversation, or rather broke in upon that already going on, by asking the younger sister how she liked the opera that evening.

‘Oh, quite charming certainly!’ she replied with a little laugh; ‘but whoever would have thought of seeing you there, Harry? I thought you was above going to sich places.’

‘It is really very low, and I wonders how anybody goes there,’ said Emma, who seemed hurt that Hartley’s first remark should be addressed to her sister. She still held his arm, and drew closer to him as she spoke.

‘Which accounts for your frequent attendance, loveliest of skull thatchers!’ said Harry in a polite bantering tone, which did not make the intended sarcasm less apparent.

‘You always call me that name, and I don’t like it,’ she said pettishly. She made as if she would withdraw her hand from its resting-place on his arm.

Hartley drew his arm away; turning half round he looked her full in her face, while a look of intense admiration lighted up his own; lifting

his cap respectfully, he said, taking her hand in his, 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, charming daughter of Bohemia!' These few words, and this affected gallantry, quite redeemed him in the eyes of the giddy girl.

'Ah, now you flatter, and I hate flattery.' Her hand found its way back again to his arm.

'I know you do, Emma, and so I advise you to go home and go to bed, for I think it is quite time a girl of seventeen was fast asleep. By-the-by, how is your poor father, is he better?' This inquiry was made in a very earnest manner, it contrasted strangely with the former part of the speech.

'I see my father this afternoon at the hospital; he is a little better I think, Mr. Hartley.' Then turning to one of the young men, she said, with an air of affected carelessness, 'Didn't we have a fine walk round the market Sunday night, Tom?'

'Should rayther say we did, and mean to go again, don't we Emma?'

'I don't know, I am sure.' A haughty toss of the head accompanied this last utterance of wounded pride and misplaced affection.

‘ Well, good night, ladies and gentlemen,’ said Harry ; and bowing grotesquely, he hurried away.

‘ Now for home,’ he muttered—must clean up—excuse to Bessie working late—lost a quarter of an hour with those stupid fools—suppose Miss Emma has got the key of the street now her father is laid up—got no mother either—gaff to-night, play on Saturday ; that is, if anybody is gull enough to take her—Sunday night Hungerford Market. They will soon get tired of that, nothing but the Eagle or Cremorne in the summer—then perhaps they will get married, and perhaps they won’t ; there are brighter girls than they walking the streets—well, serve ’em right—and yet I don’t know.’

* * * * *

The scene is changed to the front parlour of a house of respectable exterior, situated in a quiet street at the east end of London. The room is furnished with heavy, old-fashioned chattels. Over the mantel-piece there is a square looking-glass with black frame and gilt beading. On the shelf are a few shells and some dried flowers tastefully arranged in small vases ; a fire burns

brightly in the well-polished grate, convincing all whom it might concern that the fire-irons were no strangers to the brightening effects of the proper and frequent application of brickdust and leather, together with a sufficient quantity of that rare English polish, known to our grandmothers by the homely name of elbow grease.

A lovely, blue-eyed, golden-haired girl was sitting there alone. Some girls never seem in keeping with the place in which they are found; Bessie Cleveland was not one of these, you saw at once how such a girl could claim to be the presiding genius of the place, everything reflected her character, her character was reflected in everything; she, like the furniture, was thoroughly English in style, one of those young women, who, when you see them, make you hope for the future of our country; for you feel that while they are to be found in it, our nationality will never die out—a thing we sometimes think is probable, when we walk through Belgravia, or read extracts from *Le Follet*.

Laying on the table near her was a white silk bonnet, an abundance of white ribbon, and several sprigs or bunches of orange blossom. The white

ribbon was rapidly being worked up into bows, and other feminine decorations which we do not understand, and will not attempt to describe. Although Miss Cleveland was so busily engaged in trimming the bonnet, she did not look very cheerful just then. Why was that fair smooth brow learning to wrinkle? why did Bessie look so interesting? as all beauties do when they are sad. Was it because Harry did not meet her when she went to purchase that white ribbon? or was it because the wedding bonnet was not to be her own? We feel that it has become our duty to show cause.

Harry's non-appearance at the appointed time and place did not disturb her much, though it did a little—she was not jealous, she knew that he loved her; a woman's intuitive perception, that queer composition of instinct and pride on which novelists build so much, had told her this. True, he had never in so many words declared his passion, yet she thought it was deep, if hidden. The question which, in some form or other, was constantly before her mind, no matter where she was or what she was doing, was this: If he loves me, and I know he does, why don't he say so?

Then she would accuse herself of not giving him sufficient encouragement to open his heart and urge his suit ; and then think how far she might do so without betraying herself, or letting him think that she was too easily won. That which puzzled her most was how she came to love him at all ; then she would recollect how, when the young smith first made her acquaintance, she was the object of the marked attention of two or three full-whiskered, good-looking young men with respectable prospects in life. Her first impression of Hartley was unfavourable. His manners were anything but lover-like—he was almost rough at times in his behaviour towards her—yet he gradually gained her esteem and won her affection. She did not even know this, until one day she saw him passing the house in the midst of a crowd of workmen, who were carrying a man who had met with an accident in the factory to the hospital. Seeing Harry among them, she thought that some mishap had befallen him, and although her mistake was but momentary, scarcely lasting over a second of time, yet in that short time her heart had told her that her future happiness was in his keeping. Then she knew that

she loved him ; the indefinite feeling then took a positive definite form ; her heart was his, not without the full consent of her head.

We think we hear a demurrer : ' What has a girl's head to do with her heart ? Why there's not one girl in twenty who can separate them, who knows reason from feeling ; and young men are no better.'

We believe this to be quite true : there are too many unhappy marriages to prove that the male side of the question, at least, is indefensible. But then Bessie was the one girl in twenty, and so our position becomes tenable.

Miss Cleveland's common sense had confirmed her in her choice in the following particulars, and for the reasons appended to them.

She knew that should her mother die she would be left an orphan. The small sum of money which Mrs. Cleveland had saved out of the small annuity on which they both lived, united to her own earnings, for she was an industrious little milliner, would be her best earthly friend ; small and useful though it would be to her, it might become the source of great unhappiness if it, together with her well-furnished

home, proved a lure to some unprincipled man, who would marry her only to make her a pretty slave, and by the same act secure that great desideratum of all courting couples among the poorer classes—a comfortable home.

Now there was something in the rough, honest, and generous disposition which Hartley manifested when in her society, which forbade even the slightest suspicion of anything dishonourable.

She knew that he bore an excellent character; though sometimes eccentric in his way and sarcastic in his speech, he was what is called good at heart and straightforward in everything else. He had never told his love, nor did she know how to make him do so.

Under the influence of such thoughts as these she had written the little note which was found so carefully preserved in Hartley's pocket, in the vague hope that it might lead to an explanation. Since she had posted it she had felt afraid that he had read more, and yet not more than she intended; she had never written to him before. Was he taking advantage of what she already began to think a foolish act? Her face flushed when this thought crossed her mind.

She was awakened from these tantalizing considerations by a loud hard rap, followed by a number of smaller raps, on the knocker of the street door. Bessie laid the nearly-finished bonnet on the table, took up a candlestick with a lighted candle in it, put it down again, then ran quickly out of the room, through the short passage to the big mat by the door; there she stood for more than a minute, with her hand on the lock, before she opened it to her now impatient lover.

Bessie was a true woman, and loved deeply. She put the candlestick down after taking it up, because she had heard Harry mutter something objurgatory of candles on former occasions when she had taken one to light him out or light him in.

She ran along the passage, her quickly-beating heart giving her the impetus; yet she stayed a full minute before she opened the door, to ask herself if she should frown on him for his neglect, or pass it over without asking for an explanation; should she pretend to take it for granted that he could not meet her, and thus treat his neglect with quiet contempt, or his unavoidable absence

with indifference. She loved, and therefore frowned when she drew the lock back.

How frequently do those who love deceive themselves by calculating on a certain condition of mind in the person they love, concerning any incident of this description in courtship. Thus Bessie, on one side of the door, felt the neglect, and deemed an expression of contrition from Hartley her undoubted right. Harry, on his side of the door, saw that this would be expected, and came prepared with a lie to fit the case. If a man will but let reason muse—if he will but exercise a little penetration—he will find that an innocent woman is no match for him in the diplomacy of courtship. Hartley's morality was of a lower tone than Bessie's; on this she could not calculate, for she did not know it. Thus simple, pure-minded women are fooled by designing men.

When the young lady opened the door, Harry's first glance was at her forehead. He instantly perceived the expected frown; he bounded in; before she could speak he had taken her two hands in his. She felt the pressure of warm lips upon her brow; he felt the frown go out beneath his lips, and knew his peace was made without

uttering a word. They walked together, he still holding her hand, until they stood before the parlour fire.

Bessie hung her head and looked at the fire, which was now quite clear, and threw a deep crimson hue over her face, to which a little emotional perturbation lent a deeper tinge. Hartley looked at her face reflected in the glass, and wondered how he could think of deceiving such an angel; they seemed both afraid to speak.

Hartley was one of the gifted few who look a part the moment they don the habiliments which belong to it. He had exchanged his working suit for one which gave him the appearance of a gentleman; unlike most working men, he was evidently at ease in his well-fitting garments. His manner, too, was changed; his temperament seemed to have altered—to have passed from the lymphatic to the sanguine, from the dull to the brilliant. What wonderful effects will the society of a virtuous girl have on the conduct and appearance of a young man! how little do women seem to know how much they shape the characters of their husbands in courtship!

Harry was the first to break the silence, by saying—

‘A penny for your thoughts, Bessie.’

‘They’re not worth it,’ she said, in a tone of voice which tried to be cool and indignant, and therefore trembled a little.

‘Then I am sure you were thinking of me; for all day long I’ve felt convinced that I was worth nothing to you.’

‘I dare say.’

‘Come now, Bessie, don’t be cross with a fellow,’ said he, slipping his arm round her waist, while he smoothed, or tried to smooth, her hair with his other hand. ‘Besides, I’ve a complaint to make against you, Miss Cleveland.’

‘What is it?’ asked Bessie, looking up; and, looking up, her eyes met his reflected in the glass. The sparkling humour in them was contagious; she smiled, nay, almost laughed. Of course, she turned her head the other way.

‘There, I knew you wouldn’t be out with me long; your heart is too much like your face for that.’

‘Have done with your nonsense, Mr. Harry, if you please. You say I’ve done something wrong; pray tell me what it is.’

‘That I will, so here goes. I am glad to find that you meet the charge which I am about to make in a humble spirit.’ So saying, he withdrew his arm from her waist, and taking a seat in an arm-chair, he stretched his legs out full length before the fire. He then said, with great pomposity of manner, producing Bessie’s note as he spoke—

‘Your name is Bessie Cleveland?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied the young girl, immediately falling into her lover’s comic vein.

‘You sent a note to a highly respectable young man, who ought to be ten times better off than he is?’

‘I sent it to a person who took no notice of it.’

‘How could you expect that he would, when you sign yourself in this sort of way, young woman?’

‘How do you mean?’

‘How do I mean! don’t mock me, miss. Supposing that I was a young man, and really loved a very pretty, good girl—and you are both, Miss Cleveland—and she had sent me a note telling me that she wanted to see me, after I had for a long time thought—thought—thought—that I thought that I was not indifferent—ah, that’s the

word—indifferent to her ; and then to receive a note signed like this, it is too bad !’

Harry was now the lover in earnest.

‘ Well, that is my name, Harry.’

‘ Yes, yes, yes, I know ; but look, Bessie love, what goes before it. “ Yours, what shall I say ?” ’

She came and stood by his chair, and looked over his shoulder, while she said in a low, trembling tone of voice—

‘ I left it for you to put in what you liked, Harry.’

Mr. Hartley did not reply for a minute or two, then he said—

‘ I suppose I must put in what I think most likely to be true.’

‘ What is that ?’ inquired Bessie, quickly.

‘ Why, yours with indifference and contempt.’

‘ Not quite so bad as that, Harry.’

Harry took a pencil from his pocket, and wrote over the objectionable words, “ Yours, what shall I say ?” “ Yours very affectionately.” ‘ Will that do, Bessie love ?’

‘ Ain’t you afraid it will rub out, dear ; besides, it looks so in pencil ; better let me do it over with ink.’

She went to an old bureau which stood in the corner of the room, from a drawer in which she brought a pen and some ink.

Hartley found it necessary to guide her hand, of course. Poor little girl! how confused she was to be sure!

When it was finished, Mr. Hartley's eyes twinkled with evident satisfaction. When quite dry, he folded the note up and was about to place it in his pocket again, when a new idea seemed to occur to him.

'Had we not better seal it?' said he.

'How can we? You can have an adhesive envelope if you like; we've got nothing else.'

'Bah! seal it with a kiss.'

Bessie couldn't think of such a thing; somehow her words and actions were dissimilar for once.

Well, they went through that process in love-making which everybody condemns, but which nobody dislikes.

'Where is your mother to-night, old lady?'

'Gone to meeting.'

'Late, ain't she?'

'Experience meeting,—Rebecca Bowman is

going to be received as a member of the Church to-night.'

'Oh! I see; a sort of grand extra night at Beersheba. Let's see: Rebecca Bowman—that's the girl that was here the other night, and didn't forget to let us know that she had given old Jones, the minister, half a sovereign out of her last quarter's wages. How nice it must be to live on poor people, and have a parcel of girls like her jawing about it to every body!'

Bessie interrupted him by saying:

'You must not let mother hear you talk like that, Harry; she doesn't like to hear anything against the elect. Besides, you haven't been very regular at chapel lately; and she is beginning to doubt about your salvation.'

'Elect be blo——.'

Bessie held up her finger.

'Ah, well, I won't; but you know very well that I don't believe in it. I should never have gone to the place at all, only for you, Bess, and that's the truth.'

'You don't mean to say that you don't respect religion?'

‘No ; but I don’t respect humbug,’ said Harry, with emphasis.

‘What’s humbug?’ asked the young lady, innocently.

‘Why, the doctrine of election, as they call it. They make me mad to hear them talk as they do ; as if they were any better than anybody else. They contradict the Saviour himself—for he says that people are called first and chosen afterwards : but the last time I went to Beersheba, I heard the parson say flatly that they were chosen first and called afterwards ! Besides,’ he continued, speaking louder, and growing eloquent, ‘I can’t believe that God cares more for one set of narrow-minded, malignant old women, than he does for the many millions of people in the world. It’s tidy cheek of ’em to say so, I think. Besides, the only way which they can tell if you are elect or not, that I can see, in this world, is by the way you keep your sittings paid up, and the number of times you go to hear old Jones preach that one sermon of his, with the variations.’

‘O, Harry ! how can you talk so ? You ought to know better than to talk like that about religion !’

‘You always say that, Bessie, when I speak a bit of my mind about them.’

Bessie’s face reddened.

‘I only know one thing about it, Harry, and that is, that religion never did us any harm. Besides, my mother and father have attended that chapel for five-and-twenty years and better ; and Mr. Jones was very kind to us when poor father died.’

‘Ah yes ; all in the way of business—must do a bit of that sort of thing now and then, to keep up the connection, you know. Look at the money he has taken from your father and mother during a quarter of a century ! Pretty well paid for coming to see you, I think, even supposing that he got nothing when he came—and your mother (our mother I mean) is not the sort to send him or anyone empty away.’

Bessie could not help smiling at the apt quotation, and the compliment paid to her mother’s hospitable nature—perhaps the hint at the approaching relationship pleased her.

‘But what do you mean by the one sermon with the whatd’yecallems?’ said she.

‘Variations, love :—why, I’ll just tell you. I

analysed—yes, that is the word, analysed—all the sermons that I heard your pastor preach the last ten Sundays that I went there; and I found that what was in one of them was in them all—in other words, they were all alike. That is, there is a lot of talk about sin; then a lot of texts to prove it—as if people couldn't see that things are not all square; then—let me see—I read in my little grammar last night, that an adjective is a word which goes before a noun, to signify its quality—as, a good apple, a bad apple—so then there are a lot of adjectives, God being the noun—common or proper I can't say—like this: Oh, the unbounded love! Oh, the unsearchable richness! Oh, the undescrivable wisdom! Oh, the infinite majesty! Oh, the exceeding abundant grace! Oh, the glorious glory! Then comes another string of texts; then another lot about redeeming grace; then more adjectives: then a lot of flum or flattery about special grace—preserving grace! and then he thanks the common noun on their behalf, that they are the subjects of grace—of distinguishing grace, I think he calls it on the first Sunday in the month, or when there is a collection. The only difference

that I can see in any of his sermons, is, that he begins a text lower down or further on in the endless circle, and sometimes he shoves a few fresh ones in. But there, dearest! I see you don't like it; and so I won't say any more on the subject. That's rather a light bonnet for anyone to wear at this time of year;—whose is it, pray, if it isn't a secret?'

'It is no secret,' said the young girl, brightening up. 'Jane Smith is going to be married to Sam Tyrie next Christmas-day, and she asked me to trim her bonnet for her.'

Bessie here took up a sprig of the blossom and pinned it to the side of the bonnet; rising as she did so to look in the glass, she said, laughingly:

'How do I look in a wedding-bonnet?'

She looked bewitching.

At least Harry thought so, as he rose from his seat in the easy chair from which he had delivered his withering denunciations of Mr. Jones' pulpit ministrations. When fairly on his feet, he took her disengaged hand in his, the other being used to keep her bonnet to under her chin, and said:

'You look very—very lovely in it, Bessie.'

She blushed, and hung her head very grace-

fully. Perhaps she thought he told the truth, and that it would be wicked to deny it.

After a little uncomfortable pause, he said, in a tremulous voice :

‘How would you like to be a bride, Bessie?’

The usual way—nay, the almost stereotyped way of answering this question for the first time, is to say, Not at all; but Miss Cleveland told the truth as nearly as possible—that is, she answered in the subjunctive mood, as follows :

‘I suppose I must do as other girls do, and say, not at all.’

She looked at her lover sideways, and returned the warm pressure of his hand.

‘But you don’t mean it, do you?’ inquired the same tremulous voice, a little firmer than before.

‘How do I know? I can’t say.—No one ever asked me in earnest.’

‘Then I will. Will you be my wife, dearest?’

The flower in the hearthrug, always of a tropical size, seemed to expand into gigantic proportions beneath Bessie’s fixed gaze. She did not expect this so soon; and yet half an hour before she would have given almost anything to have heard it. Hearing it completely overcame her.

Why is love like an aching tooth?

Because it gives us the most pain, and causes the most fear, when it is about to be drawn from our mouths. Beautiful analogy!—not Oriental either.

Mr. Hartley was in that mental state known as the first cigar, or, my first champagne,—that is, he saw and knew all about everything around him, but could define nothing. At last he summoned courage to speak again.

‘Bessie, be mine!’ He kissed her hand.

Antimesmeric influence!

The flower resumed its former proportions.

‘I’ll see,’ she whispered. Looking him in the face for a moment, she dropped her eyes again.

‘But now, Bessie!—now, dearest!’ (He removed the bonnet from her head and laid it on the table)—‘Make me happy now, Bessie; say one little word!’

He played with her golden ringlets as he breathed forth these all-important, cut-and-dried nothings, in the most impassioned undertones.

He was rewarded by hearing something to his advantage.

* * * * *

These asterisks are not put in to vex young lady readers, but for two reasons, which we subjoin.

Firstly ; what followed, or the greater part of it, was spoken in a language which it is impossible to put upon paper, namely, the language of the eyes, assisted by the fingerage of those powerful psychological mediums, the hands.

Secondly ; we believe in the loveability of the human race generally ; and therefore we do not expect that this book will fall into the hands of any one who is now, or always will be, ignorant of the practical conjugation of the verb To Love, on the principle so successfully applied by the world-renowned Wackford Squeers in relation to the verb To Pump.

From these premises we draw the conclusion, that those who have already wooed and won their peculiar Clementinas—or those who have been wooed and won by their particular Alphonsos—will acquit us of trying to shirk a difficult, if not impossible task, when we acknowledge our incapability to describe the sayings and doings, the billings and cooings, of these lovers on their betrothal-night ; while to those who have not yet learned to love, we must only say,

in the language of the People's poet, 'Wait a little longer.'

Nevertheless, we confess that a faint idea of what passed might be formed by linking together, according to the poetic fancy of the reader, such stock phrases as these:—'Transcendant loveliness,' 'thrill of enchantment,' 'smiles of ineffable sweetness,' 'zephyr whispers,' 'tender embraces,' 'beatific feelings,' 'visions of bliss,' 'Elysium.'—But there; an hour of this sort of thing passed away. They are seated side by side; a quiet peaceful look sits upon Bessie's face, while a slight frown seemed out of place on Hartley's brow. Bessie did not see that look; love colours everything, and even if it did not, it would have been quite impossible for her to attribute it to its cause. They were both silent—a sweet blissful silence—destined to be broken by an unpleasant confession from Hartley.

'I feel just a little unhappy even now that you are sitting by my side, and I know that you are mine, dearest.'

Bessie looked surprised, and desired him to explain the cause.

'Why, what is the matter, you silly fellow?'

‘ Well, I must tell you that I came here with the intention of deceiving you. The fact is, I’ve not been to work to-day, and I ought to have taken you out. ’

‘ O, Harry ! never mind me, but I am so sorry you didn’t go to work. ’

‘ Why, love ? ’

‘ Because I am afraid that you will lose your work. ’

‘ And what if I do, dear ? I can go somewhere else. ’

‘ Yes ; but then, Harry, you might not get work in London, and then you’ll be tramping up and down country, as you call it, like your old companion Ned Webb, and like him be no good to nobody. ’

She would have added, and we shall be separated ; but love had not quite conquered pride yet in the lovely maiden’s heart.

Harry still looked very gloomy. Bessie was anxiously trying to read her lover’s thoughts in his face, a face which we have already seen was not always an index to the mind, though it was so then. At last he said—

‘ Well, perhaps you are right, love, though I

can't help thinking that you are just a little too frightened about my losing my anvil at Screw and Bolts ; and as for Ned Webb, he is a fine fellow, as much above me in intellect and knowledge as I am bigger than a baby in size ; he is a fellow that nobody understands, and so, of course, everybody runs him down—that is, at the factory. At any rate I admire him much, and only wish I were more like him in some of his ways.'

'A fine thing it would be for your lady love, you know, to find her lover one week in Manchester, the next in Birmingham, or Liverpool, or Glasgow. No, no, Harry ! don't you do it ; you had better stop in one place if you can, and win the respect and esteem of your employers, like my father did.'

'To be turned off in old age to go to the work-house. Why, now, look at old Tom Adams ; worked for one firm eighteen years, broke his arm last week ; why, they even stopped his pay from the moment he left the factory ; why, they even stopped the men's time who took him to the hospital. There is no good feeling between employers and skilled workmen. There may be between flunkeys and their masters, between clerks and

their governors—though not much I believe ; but as for us, there is not so much as you could cram in your eye and see none the worse for. What do we care for them ? what do they care for us ? They only have us when they want us, not a moment longer, never fear, and we are ditto ditto with the double smut. One man's money is as good as another's to us, Bessie dear ; and I would leave any place for two shillings a week more and three months certain.'

Bessie saw that her lover had mounted his favourite horse, *i.e.*, the grievances of the workmen ; so she endeavoured to draw his attention to other matters, by asking if Tom Adams was better.

' Well, better—at least so his daughter told me to-night. I haven't seen him since Sunday. By-the-by, dear, I am very much afraid those girls of his will come to no good.'

' Why, Harry ?'

' Well, I only think so ; I heard one of them say that they went to Hungerford Market together last Sunday night.'

' There is nothing bad in that, is there, Harry ?'

Mr. Hartley gave her much the same sort of

look as that which the old Israelite Fagan gave Oliver Twist when he said, 'How green you are, my tear!' as he replied half interrogatively—

'Why, don't you know that it is the place where all the fast little shopboys take their little bits of girls, and treat them to ices and French confectionery; where the little monkeys learn to smoke their first cigars, and think themselves men? You can guess that no good can come of going to such a place, especially to a silly giddy girl like Emma. So I was just a-thinking as I came along that you might speak to her, and try to make her as much like yourself as you can; for it would break her father's heart if any harm came of her.'

At this moment, the sound of the key being turned in the lock of the street door interrupted the conversation. Bessie sprang to her feet, took the candle in her hand this time, and went into the passage to meet and welcome her mother. While she was gone, Mr. Hartley vacated the arm-chair, and took a seat on one right opposite to that part of the table on which Miss Cleveland's work lay still unfinished. How artful lovers are to be sure!

CHAPTER IV.

AN OLD WOMAN'S THEOLOGY.

MRS. CLEVELAND was one of those people who usually pass through the last twenty years of their lives under the appellation of good old souls, that is, if they live to be threescore and ten.

Mrs. Cleveland well deserved this title, complimentary though it is considered among the class to which she belonged. Her face bore the marks of trouble and old age; her thin bony hands, with the thick blue veins standing prominently on the backs thereof, told a tale of hard work; while her silvery hair gave a quiet dignity to her appearance; her quick eye and bustling manner made her seem a person whose natural energy of character was outliving her physical strength. She indeed fulfilled one of the noblest negative duties of old age. She inspired the hearts of the young with hope by her presence, for no right-

mindful young person could look upon that venerable face and behold the lines which care and time had written there, together with the benign and gentle expression which was over all, without feeling their moral strength renewed, and the determination creeping over their souls to fight the battle of life on true principles, feeling conscious that what she had done by their aid they might do.

Such was the worthy old lady who now entered the parlour, attired in her regular go-to-meeting winter dress, the outer portion of which consisted of an old brown cloak, with velvet trimmings of the same colour worn over a fur tippet, which had once belonged to her daughter, which in its turn covered a light summer shawl folded across her breast and tied tightly behind.

Bessie was soon engaged in undoing her mother, while Mrs. Cleveland took off her bonnet, which in shape was a happy compromise between the ancient railway tunnel and the modern oyster shell pattern; it was ornamented with blonde whiskers and purple water cresses. She chatted away like this:

‘Very late, very cold too! delightful meetin’ to-night, felt it good to be there; wish you had

been there. Anybody been? that table cover is all on one side! why didn't you keep up a better fire?'

Harry began poking it vigorously.

'Ah, Harry, are you here? didn't see you at chapel last Sunday night. You saw that young woman that was here t'other night; well, she joined us to-night; she's the youngest and I am the oldest in the Church, and as Deacon Badham said, we were both named Rebecca; a mother and daughter in Israel, I think he said. Get the supper ready, Bess; you puss, don't stand biting your nails—nasty habit—don't. We ain't got much, only what we have we give unto you, Harry my boy.'

Harry, who deeply revered the old lady, was ostensibly engaged in rubbing strangers off the bars of the grate, but really absorbed in drawing a comparison between the two Rebeccas; he knew the nobility of soul of the one and the cringing boastful spirit of the other. Looking up, he said—

'Well, but Mrs. Cleveland you have never told me how you are to-night.'

'Not quite so well as I should like, you know;

but I am getting old now, Harry ; besides, the Lord has been very gracious to me,—the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, as David says. Yet, if there is one thing which plays on my mind more than another, it is that neither you nor Bessie shows any wish to join the Church. I couldn't help a-thinking on it to-night when I heard that young woman stand up and tell 'em all what good things the Lord had done for her ; it made me quite unhappy—it did, Harry.'

'If she were not so old and kind to me,—if she were a man,—I could tell what I think,' thought that individual.

'If mother asks him why he does not join the Church he'll tell her the truth, I know him well enough for that, and then they'll quarrel,' thought the third person present, and so it proved.

One of the peculiarities of old people is a certain feeling of self-satisfaction about everything they do, no matter what it is nor how humble grace may have made them. We once knew an old woman who could scarcely see, who persisted in getting up the linen of a small family—she believed her forte to be shirt fronts. When she had finished one she would exhibit it on the clothes

horse as a wonder of the ironing art, although a good housewife would have declared that it was not fit to be seen. This very natural state of mind was precisely that in which Mrs. Cleveland returned from the chapel that evening with regard to religion and the religious generally, and her place of worship and all connected with it: particularly, this was in a great measure owing to the laudatory address in the shape of advice which the Deacon had given to the youngest sister in the Church, in which he exhorted her to follow in the footsteps of the elders, interlarding his speech with texts of this description: 'Press forward to the mark of your high calling;' 'Run and not be weary, walk and not faint;' 'Set aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you,'—winding up with an implication that this had all been done by some present.

'Ah!' continued the old lady, with a deep-drawn sigh, 'my poor husb'ing as has been dead ten 'ears last Thursday as ever was, when Bess was only eight 'ears old, and had just begun to go to Sunday-school, and used to bring home her merit ticket so reg'lar,—lor, it only seems the other day when she used to wear a little Scotch-

plaid dress, the same as in the middle of my patchwork counterpane—this very day, well, as I was going to say, he, good man, heaven rest him! made me promise him that I would try to bring Bessie up in the fear of the Lord, and bring her to join the Lord's elect this side Jordan. Now she's eighteen, and a woman grown, and yet the Lord has not taken her to himself.'

'Well, but if I understand anything about old Jones's preaching, that's neither her fault nor mine.'

Bessie, who had been laying the supper-things, now came in, and took a seat between her mother and her lover, just in time to hear Harry express this opinion. She pinched his arm as a signal to be quiet and say nothing, but it was too late; he was on a favourite argumentative tack.

'Faith cometh by hearing,' said the old lady, smartly; 'and you can't expect to be convinced if you don't listen to the word which is able to make you wise unto salvation.'

'But I have done it dozens of times,' he cried impetuously.

'Those that seek him early shall find him. My son, give me thy heart;' said the old lady,

who was now greatly excited, and was fast giving way to that old habit of untrained controversialists on religious matters, viz., the quoting of texts of Scripture without any regard to relevancy.

'According to that,' broke in Harry, his face red, and his eyes flashing with unusual excitement,—'according to that, I've got to seek God, and not God seek me; I can't understand it. I am afraid I never shall if it's no plainer than this, Mrs. Cleveland. I am sorry to say it to you, ma'am, but I think it's nothing more nor less than humbug.'

'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. These things are too high for you; you cannot understand them, yet, young man.'

As she uttered these words the thought of her own spiritual attainments, as set forth in the deacon's address, flashed across her mind, and she bridled up somewhat.

'You can't blame me then,' said Harry, who saw the look, and put the broadest construction on it, 'if you get into heaven and I don't.'

He had now lost all self-control. Bessie was terrified, but said nothing. Mrs. Cleveland,

whose memory kept on supplying her with texts to which she had long ago given a meaning of her own, now threw another on the blazing pile of Hartley's wrath. Like oil poured upon fire was this word out of season. It was now quite evident that the old lady was rapidly losing her temper, for she said harshly—

‘This is your condemnation, that you believed not.’

‘How do you make it out? First you say that we can't believe if we are not led by the Spirit, then you say that we shall be condemned for not believing! it isn't in reason.’

‘The world by wisdom knoweth not God. These things were revealed unto babes, and hidden from the wise and prudent, and they will only be revealed unto those unto whom the Lord pleaseth to reveal them. The wind bloweth where it listeth.’

‘Why you don't mean to tell me that God has given me reason, and a soul to be saved, and that I must not use the one when the greatest interests of the other are at stake? If so, why didn't he make a beautiful world and then make all the people blind, so that they couldn't see it?’

The old lady was completely overpowered by this last flash of rude rhetoric. She mentally threw aside the Book, and stood on her own grounds as a woman and a householder. How few can refrain from becoming personal in disputation!

‘And who are you, sir, who dares to speak like this to me in my own house before my only child?’

‘Harry Hartley, Mrs. Cleveland; a rough blacksmith who, with the greatest respect for you, cannot quite swallow all that your favourite tubthumper would like him; and who thinks himself quite as capable of judging of things of this kind as old Jones, all his deacons, and his two pew-openers into the bargain. Now you know who I am, first and last, upright and down-straight.’

He snatched up his hat, and put it on. As he turned to leave the room he felt a hand laid gently on his arm; he endeavoured to smother his passion which in another moment would have betrayed itself more strongly in tears of rage. Finding Bessie trying to prevent his departure he released himself from her, exclaiming as he did so—

E

‘ Ah! Bessie, lass, I’ll see you again, dear ;
but as for coming into this place again I never
will.’

He snatched a hasty kiss, and in another mo-
ment was in the street.

CHAPTER V.

A MIDNIGHT ENCOUNTER.

ST. PAUL'S clock was striking twelve ; the snow was falling fast ; nearly all the public-houses were closed. Active policemen were trying house-doors and shop-shutters ; retiring or lazy policemen were looking out for the inspector, or smoking short pipes in sly corners. Everything was wretched and miserable, even to the contemplation of the most calmly philosophic of night-duty cabmen,—and doubly wretched and miserable to Hartley, who was neither calm nor philosophic just then. His rapid strides contrasted strangely with the slow regulation pace of the policemen whom he passed, with the step-and-fetch-it movement of the foot-pads and pickpockets he met, and the mincing steps of the poor girls who are to be found in the streets at that hour.

On, on he went, working under too much

steam from within. His progress was suddenly brought to an end ; he stumbled over something which lay on the pavement. That which had nearly caused him to fall was the body of a middle-aged female, one of a number of persons who were huddled together on the steps of the Union workhouse and the pave near them.

‘Holloa here, wake up, mother!’ cried the excited young man, feeling rather grateful that he had not measured his length upon the freestone ; ‘wake up, here! How is this? haven’t got the lease of the big bedroom, have you? Oh, I see ; casual ward full.’

(He read these words on a board suspended to the door.) Then he added—

‘It’s too bad, I’m blowed if it ain’t too bad. Well, old gal, here’s a shilling for you ; go and get a sixpenny rope [lodging], and stick to the change. You’ve a right to do what you like with your own, but I should advise a toothful of brandy.’

So saying he lifted her and held her up in his powerful arms.

The poor half-frozen woman evidently only half understood him. She took the money in an unconscious, mechanical way ; the change from a

crouching to a standing posture helped very much to bring her to her senses.

At this moment the door opened to allow a policeman to walk out. He had been inside to see what could be done for the accommodation of the poor creatures who were thus exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

‘Can’t you do anything for ’em, Mr. Peel? Poor things! if they were thieves they would take better care of them.’

‘You are right there, sir,’ replied the true-hearted man in blue.

While they exchanged these opinions the door remained open. A strong light from within threw its rays on Hartley’s face. The poor woman, who was now somewhat revived, made use of the time the light lasted to imprint every feature of her benefactor’s physiognomy upon her heart. He had used the right chemicals to make the photograph a lasting one.

Finding that the woman could stand without his aid he bade her a very respectful good night. Poor thing! she could only shed tears of gratitude, and attempt to speak her thanks.

‘That will—that will do. You’ve come to the

worst part of it, my friend; if you thank me, I shan't know what to say.'

She walked slowly away.

'Now, Sir Robert, will you take a glass to keep the cold out? There ain't much fear of a riot here,' said Harry, pointing to the group upon the ground.

'Don't mind if I do. Move on.'

'Is she a regular hand at this lag?'

He looked significantly in the direction which the recipient of his bounty had taken as he asked the question.

'I don't think she is. Never twigged her at it before. She seems a bettermost sort of woman, for when she might have gone in just now she wouldn't, but let another woman with a baby take her turn. I put it down that she thought the baby would be perished with cold.'

Very likely. Here's an open house: wait here.'

Harry then entered the public-house. He mentioned the words, 'for policeman outside,' to the sleepy barman. He did thus to insure a good stiff tumbler of grog, for he had been in a night-house before, and knew the strength of the spirits usually drawn from the twelve o'clock tap. . .

The worthy guardian of honest men, and protector of fools, partook freely of the warm potation. He seemed touched to the stomach by Hartley's generosity, for he asked him very earnestly if he had relieved the woman.

'Well, yes; I gave her the price of a St. Giles's roost. Good night.'

'Blow me if I don't go back and make them stow them in the hall somewhere. Good night, sir.'

It so happened that the poor woman whom Hartley had so opportunely assisted had taken the road which he determined to take. He did not observe this, or he would have gone in another direction.

She was already a considerable distance in advance of him when, on turning the corner of the street, she met three young men, habited like young English gentlemen. They were walking abreast, holding each other's hands. They were intoxicated, and seemed in a fair way to put in an appearance at Bow Street the next morning, to hear a magisterial opinion of their conduct. Before the woman had time to step into the road, and allow them to pass they had encircled her, the tallest

of the party, who had a military look about his whiskers and moustaches, exclaiming as they did so—

‘S’help me, Mars and Venus, a wevy quever fivank movement. By Jove! what a supplended guop for your next picture, Jones.’

‘Right you are, old booy,’ replied that individual; then he added, with great articulatory difficulty, ‘Fine, declare! Let me see—Number forty-nine, a group representing Minerva surrounded by heroes. Society’s gold medal to Angelo Jones Walker, eh! Captain Leclerqe!’

‘Bah!’ chimed in the third, ‘philanthropy and tasting orders go hand in hand with me. I think we’ve got a fine specimen. Lieutenant Blackmore—“London by Moonlight”—fool to it! Call a cab, captain, and let us take her to Exeter Hall at once, and show her up while she is fresh.’

‘Let me go, gentlemen; do not hinder a poor woman from her business.’

She would have said home, but remembered that she had none. She made a strong effort to release herself from them; she could not do this, for unfortunately she happened to be the very

thing for which the three friends had been looking for some time, namely, something which was neither a lamp-post nor a policeman, but which like them both was self-supporting. They had gone through an irregular course of experiments on each other, with the purpose (not openly avowed by either of them) of finding that law in physics by which three falling bodies could be made to hold each other up. It occurred to them all simultaneously that the addition of a fourth body of greater gravity than that which they individually possessed, would enable them effectually to resist the action of that natural law which affects equally the inspirited philosopher and that fruit which Eve and Newton have made eternally famous.

‘And pway who are you, woman, and whaat businesh have you out at a twime consequated to wenching off knockers and bellhandles?’ said he of the military aspect, who seemed more sober than the other two.

‘Oh,’ said the artist, ‘some pious old hen whose duckling has taken to the waters of iniquity; she’s going to cluck her out; if we let her go we shall spoil sport.’

‘Let me go, gentlemen, or I shall scream for help,’ cried the woman, growing more and more alarmed at her position.

‘Oh, that’s right, scream away! sound Commissioner Mayne’s assembly, and we shall have the peelers down on us in thousands.’

At this moment they heard the sound of an approaching footstep: it was Hartley’s. The poor creature looked round, and at a glance recognized her benefactor.

‘Help me! help me, sir!’ she cried piteously. ‘You have already saved me once, save me now! Oh, do!’

Once excited, Hartley went to extremes in all he did, bad or good. Had he possessed the means he would have relieved all the poor people whom he found outside the workhouse. Not able to do this, he treated the policeman with the remainder of his money, just because he had seen him coming out of the place of refuge, after making the proper inquiries about them. He thought that he understood the relative positions of the parties. Three strong men attacking a poor defenceless woman, whom he had so recently found in such a deplorable plight. Without a

word he dealt the artist a heavy blow on the face, which made him totter and fall: he then took hold of the philanthropical gentleman by the collar, and swung him into the middle of the road: he then turned to look for the third man, and was surprised to find him in a defensive attitude, which would have convinced any patron of the ring—any noble lord—that he had done more than look at a pair of boxing-gloves.

‘Now, mother, stand out of the way; don’t go quite out of sight, for a lie and a sovereign will get me a month if you don’t appear.’ So saying he put up his spar as it is called, and prepared to meet his remaining opponent.

‘Now my man,’ said the captain, throwing aside the drawl and speaking quickly. ‘I am not quite so sober as I should like to be, for this bout; but still, I wish to say that I’ve a decided objection to wearing such a pair of spectacles as those you have so kindly given my friend (who has very properly gone to the grass) without making some slight acknowledgment. I don’t expect Jones will open his eyes to-morrow, not even to look through your handsome present. You have got a knack of hitting straight out

from the shoulder, which I greatly admire. I also like your courage. I think you were quite right to take her part, but then you ought to know that she was only detained by three drunken men; were you, mother?’

The woman gave a shivering assent.

‘And then, as for the lie and locking-up, I’m too often locked up myself to wish to do you that kindness.’ So saying, he dropped his arms as a sign of truce.

‘Why you see,’ said Harry, who at once perceived a genial spirit in the captain, ‘I was rather too hot, but the fact is I only just picked this poor starving creature off the Union door-steps, and it got my monkey up to see you maul her about.’

‘Did you, by Jove? I feel ashamed of myself. Will an apology do, man? As for you, sir, whoever you are, we will crack a bottle together.’

‘Better give her the money, sir,’ suggested Hartley; ‘it will do me as much good.’

‘Ah, by George! you are right again. Missus, here is half a sovereign for you.’

An empty cab now passed along. Hartley

hailed the driver. The captain took the hint, although the other young men evinced some desire to exhibit a little pugilistic skill: when Harry offered to assist them, they afterwards submitted to the inevitable, and were thrown into the cab. The captain took a seat on the box; then taking a card from his pocket, he gave it to Hartley, saying, 'Now mind you look me up; I shall be proud to see you.' The cabman then drove off.

The poor woman again approached Hartley, to express her gratitude; but he would not listen to her, he only shook her hand warmly, and then took to his heels.

CHAPTER VI.

INNER LIFE.

WE return to the Clevelands. Poor Bessie's heart sank within her when she heard her affianced husband slam the door, and listened to his retreating footsteps as he passed the house. The simple girl could not imagine anything worse than a cross word with her mother: it had been the chief study of her life to avoid saying or doing anything calculated to irritate her parent. The whole philosophy of her life was made up of four great principles; in other words, she was a girl of four ideas. These four ideas might be stated as follows:—

The first, strict attention to her religious duties, as enjoined by her friend Miss Paris, the Bible-class teacher in the sabbath-school in which she had been brought up.

The second, implicit parental obedience anticipatory of her mother's slightest wish.

Third, a firm belief that Dr. Watts spoke the truth when he said in rhyme that his Satanic majesty gave all idlers employment.

Fourth, a great love, with a real object, that real object the happiness of Harry Hartley.

The quarrel, as seen from her point of view, took the shape of a great social catastrophe. Had Europe been desolated by war or famine; had every Scotchman returned to Caledonia, or any other equally calamitous and unexpected event transpired; if it did not affect the well-being of the persons who formed the small circle of her acquaintance, she would have treated it with indifference, as if unworthy of a thought. She was one of those girls who could stop you and ask you what you thought of that silk dress, or how you would sew this gusset in, while you were describing with burning eloquence some of the horrible deeds perpetrated at the siege of Lucknow. She resumed her seat and looked pensively at the fire.

The old lady tried to find an escape valve for her feelings in activity; she therefore soon filled

her daughter's plate, although a swelling something in her own throat forbade or prevented her from saying, 'Come child, eat!'

This state of affairs lasted for half an hour, neither of them having the courage to break the silence.

Then Miss Cleveland, who had been completely absorbed in her own thoughts, rose to take away the supper things, supposing that her mother had partaken of her evening meal. She finished this duty without meeting her mother's glance; indeed, this would have been difficult, for the good woman's eyes were pertinaciously fixed upon the table. She then brought out the Family Bible, and began with a trembling voice to read the allotted chapter. This done she closed the book, and knelt at her mother's feet and repeated audibly the words of the Lord's Prayer. She had never omitted this lovely form of domestic worship. From her childhood up, never had she knelt before her mother in so much real distress of soul; and as her golden hair fell in rich wavy luxuriance upon her mother's hands, the old lady's eyes filled with tears. Mrs. Cleveland loved her daughter more than all the world;

there was a genuine sympathy between them. She knew the cause of Bessie's unhappiness, perhaps, better than the poor girl did herself.

“I am not come to send peace into the world but a sword, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household,” muttered the old lady half aloud, ‘and yet the poor boy can't see it, so I have been too harsh with the honest lad.’

Poor Bessie burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

‘O mother, Harry asked me to be his wife to-night, and now you—you will not like—you will not consent, will you, mother?’ she added imploringly.

‘Me give my consent, of course, whatever possesses the girl? of course I will,’ said the old lady, stooping down and kissing her daughter's upturned tearful face. ‘I was only a little cross with the lad; but I like him, for he says what he means, and it is all over in a minute. He is something like me; besides, it isn't for me to change his heart.’

Bessie could see no necessity for change, but she wisely held her peace.

Her mother now began to wipe her eyes with her apron, as if she had been a child five years of

age; while doing so, she said, as only good old women can say such things, 'Now cry, baby lassie; go to bed, and if you see Harry in the morning, and I don't doubt but what you will, sly puss, tell him I shall be very cross with him if he don't come to supper to-morrow night. There, get along do,' she added playfully, as her daughter kissed her cheek affectionately. The mother saw a bright beaming smile coming over the face so recently clouded by gloomy anticipations. The two then retired to their respective chambers. They were soon engaged in their private devotions. In all outward forms, mother and daughter were precisely alike; in their worship they each read a hymn, they each read the evening portion, they each knelt down, they drew near the Father through the Son; but here the similarity ended. To the daughter that Son was Jesus of Nazareth, the friend of the poor, the simple speaker of kind words, the feeder of five thousand hungry people, the loving Saviour who died upon the cross, for her, for all. She always associated Him in her mind with his acts of mercy and love; and then his words, she knew them every one. She loved Him for all these things,

and when she prayed to Him and called herself sinful, it was not because she had been taught texts of Scripture, which made her believe she was so, nor was it because she could accuse herself of any very wicked thoughts or actions, but because she struck a comparison between His character and her own. Happy indeed are they whose sins are exclusively those of omission. She knew Him as the loving Lord, who, looking upon Jerusalem, exclaimed, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not.' Or as the Son of God, who said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.' Or as the great benevolent sympathiser, who said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

Mrs. Cleveland looked upon Jesus as upon one who died to save *her* from *her* sins, and *his*

people from *their* sins. She saw Him as that person in the Godhead who met Saul on his way to Damascus, breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; who afterwards made him the preacher to the Gentiles appointed to be saved, of whom *she was one*. She knew that God whom Paul had said the Athenians worshipped in ignorance. She knew that Messiah whom the Jews had refused. She had accepted Him whom the builders rejected. To the learned both of the Jews and Greeks, he had been a stumbling block; but the stone which had fallen and crushed them, was that on which she had fallen and been broken some years ago. In other words, Mrs. Cleveland looked upon the central truths of Christianity through the medium of its first expounders, as set forth by them in its early literature; and this as again expounded by a man of small intellect, and smaller educational advantages. The daughter read and loved the gospels, the mother lived in the psalms and epistles.

Those theologians who, when reading these last-mentioned writings, feel themselves compelled to admit that they perceive the human element

mingled with the divine—man speaking, as well as God speaking by man—and who yet believe the whole book to be written by inspiration of God, will be best able to judge as to which of the two enjoyed the most communion with the God of David, the God of Paul, and the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,—the mother or the daughter.

So endeth the reading of the chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

NED WEBB.

IF we were on terms of great intimacy with a great painter (an *artist*, not an artisan), we should very likely say to him, after looking over his studio, 'Ah! well. Yes, we admire your style, and your colouring is unquestionably good; for instance, that dog's nose looks like greasy leather itself, and we have no doubt but that is exactly like a castle on the Rhine. You almost expect to see that stone tumble out of its place in the dilapidated turret, and fall on the head of that lump of blue and white who is driving that flock of whity-brown dots to the farm-house in the distance; but did you ever visit the large smithy of Messrs. Screw, Bolt and Co., the eminent engineers? No, then you have lost one of the finest scenes to be found in this country, or out of it.' So you would say, reader, were you to go there some

dark winter's morning soon after six o'clock. Some fifty forge-fires ranged on three sides of a large square building, are throwing out sparks, flame, and smoke. Some of the heats (hot iron so called) are already on the anvils, or lay cooling in the water-tanks, thus receiving their shape, name, and baptism into the world of utility from the hands of those stalwart men who wield those great hammers with such ease and dexterity. There is scarcely a position which the human form is required to take for modelling, which is not taken by one or more of these men every minute, while nothing can surpass the scene for light and shade.

Among these modern Tubals, Harry is hard at work: his fire is at a forge on which there are two; the other fire being worked by Sam Waters, one of the young men who was at the gaff the night before. When the fires had burned a little clearer, and the coals emitted less smoke than they did at first lighting, the young men were able to see each other, and a conversation then took place between them.

‘What cheer, Harry; how are you coming on?’

‘First rate; how do you bring it in?’

‘Oh, first rate! You know where you left us last night?’

‘Rather.’

‘Well, we went for a sugar-baker’s walk there and back again. We didn’t go far before Tom proposed a drop of gin to keep the cold out.’

‘Gin?’ asked Harry, musingly.

‘Of course; it don’t pay to give ’em anything else yet.’

‘Did the girls drink?’

‘Drink! Ah, that oldest one did like a fish; but the other one, my lot, only put her lips to it. I tried all I knowed to make her lap, but she wouldn’t nohow. Tom is a-going to take Emma to the play Saturday night.’

‘Did you have any more drink?’

‘Well, yes, should say we did. The fact is, I think that Gipse, as we calls her, was no soberer than my old man is arter he’s been to quarterly night at his club.’

‘You mean drunk.’

‘Ay, lad; and Tom told me that he didn’t think it would be long before she turned out’—

Here the foreman came up and spoke to Sam, so the conversation ceased.

During the day Hartley spoke little, and sang less than usual. He finished nearly double the usual amount of work. It was evident to all that this unusual industry did not arise from any love of work, 'only something wrong somewhere,' said his partners in toil, one to another.

'Had a row with that gal of his,' said Tom to a tall smith who stood near him.

'Ah!' replied Vulcan. 'Perhaps the blues are quartered on him. Away all day yesterday—expects short tin Saturday night. If he is so now, how will he be when he gets her tied to him, and half a dozen kids besides? If he funks over a day's pay now, what will he do then? Why, I've often taken a week's spree, tight as a bottle every day; and I've got an old woman and three brats to keep. He is a steady young man, that Hartley.'

That young man Hartley had been ruminating on the quarrel of the night before. At ten o'clock in the morning of that day, he had determined never to see mother or daughter any more, they were too good for him. At midday, he thought that he would see Bessie again and explain everything, then break off his engagement with

her for ever. At two o'clock in the afternoon, he had an idea that she loved him, and would be unhappy if he broke off the match ; besides, no true man would do it ; but then her mother. At three o'clock he thought that Mrs. Cleveland was a good old woman at heart, but very passionate and extremely bigoted ; she might look over it ; he really felt heartily sorry that it had occurred. An hour later he determined to go and apologise that very night, and see about renewing the intimacy on the old terms.

It was a fine sharp frosty night, the moon had risen high and was shining brightly in the clear blue heavens. As Harry hurried along, he could not help contrasting it with the dark, gloomy, snowy weather of the night before, and drawing from the comparison a faint hope that as the quarrel had taken place under such an unfavourable display of the vapours by nature, that his return to his true love's bower might be accompanied by an equally brilliant change in the looks of those who witnessed his last departure therefrom. At least, he thought the change in the weather a favourable omen. There was deep philosophy in the thought. Many men who

laugh at Old Mother Shipton's Book of Fate, have done, and still do more foolish things than this, when they look upon the book of nature with a troubled soul.

Stirred up by such thoughts as these, he walked quickly on. He started as he felt a hand laid on his shoulder; the first thing that met his eye, on looking towards his shoulder, was a large brilliant set in a ring of great thickness, the ring being affixed to a very white finger, in its turn belonging to a very white hand, almost too large to be so very white. Harry had never shaken such a white hand in his life, nor had he seen that ring before; so that he looked eagerly from the hand, up the arm, over the shoulder, to the face of the person who had thus familiarly hindered his progress. He scarcely remembered the features of that face; the stranger quickened his memory by using his voice and saying—

‘Who goes there? Bernardo?’

This was enough; Hartley instantly replied—

‘The same: ’tis he.’ Then, with a burst of enthusiasm, he exclaimed, ‘What! Ned Webb, old fellow! how are you?’

‘Harry, old son, how do you get on?’ and the

two exchanged a hearty and affectionate shake of the hands.

‘And what brings you from Wittemburg, fellow student, I was going to say, but, as I ought to say, my dear old friend, my intellectual father?’

‘Well, to keep in the same character and tell the truth as well, I suppose I must say, A truant disposition, good my lord; you havn’t forgotten our old quotations, I find.’

‘Nor am I likely to, old friend. But, I say, how soft and white your hands are; you must have been out of collar a long time. I thought you were shaping boiler plates at H——.’

‘So I was; but there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But the air bites shrewdly; let’s to mine host of the Garter, he brews good sack; and I will then, a round unvarnished tale deliver of my whole course of life since last we met.’

‘Lead on, I follow,’ said Hartley, whose pleasure at meeting his friend was unbounded.

That individual laid his hand upon Harry’s arm in an impressive manner, while a smile which he vainly endeavoured to keep down

played around his lips, as he thus delivered himself in measured tones—

‘Know all men by these presents, that whereas Harry Hartley, blacksmith, formerly knew Ned Webb, boiler-maker ; that he, the aforesaid Harry Hartley, knoweth him no more by that style, title, and occupation, but as Montague Villiers Leicester, the eminent eccentric comedian of the Theatre Royal L——. Coat of arms: sledge-hammer broken, hare’s-foot rampant, on a green field ; motto, *Dontus carebus nixus.*’

‘Why you don’t mean to say that you have turned actor, Ned, or Montague, or whatever names you go by?’

‘I am but a poor player,’ said the other, enjoying the surprise depicted in the face of his pupil. ‘But come, let us seek the worsted stocking wearing loon, the base-born knave who does a spigot wield, and drink a cup of ambrosia pure the gods themselves might envy.’

They entered a public-house ; as they passed by the tap, on their way to the coffee-room, they heard the coarse voices of a score of persons

singing the chorus of a song, the words of which we subjoin :—

‘Says she to him, my dear, have you made much overtime?
These were my mother’s customs, and so they shall be
mine.’

They were soon in a snug corner of the coffee-room, with a table to themselves. The waiter who followed them received and disappeared with Ned’s order for a bottle of wine. Ned, who was built on the Polish count or lady-killing principle, wanted whiskers to make him handsome; they were shaven off, the hair on his temples sharing the same fate; his hair jet black and curly, his forehead, high and broad, was covered with a flexible skin, which opened and closed at the possessor’s will like the bellows of a concertina: he now opened the talk by asking Harry how he got on with his education.

‘Well, I’ve followed your instructions as closely as possible. I’ve read all Dickens’s works, some of Jerrold’s, and gone once through Shakespeare and half through again, besides reading no end of newspapers, scientific articles, and parliamentary reports. I’ve also attended a great many theatres, and I’ve seen some of the best actors in their finest parts. Always acting on

your advice, I've gone to the extremes both ways; thus I've read Milton, and in less than an hour I've heard a dirty song at a free-and-easy; or, as I did yesterday, went to the Abbey in the afternoon and wound up with a penny gaff at night. I've also got as far as adjectives in grammar, but I find it dry work.'

'I am very glad to hear that you have accomplished so much,' replied the other with an air of deep sincerity; 'and I do so the more for I behold in your tentative efforts the reflection of my own. But come, I drink to your success, and wet both eyes.' So saying, he filled and emptied his glass twice.

'And I to yours, in whatever you undertake; but I am going to ask you to grant me two great favours.'

'What are they, lad? Say on; I am bound to hear thee.'

'Why, you see, I've never known you so well—that is, I've never felt at liberty to ask you before—but as you seem to have no objection to tell me how you became an actor, I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me the story of your life from year to year.'

‘I will that tale unfold,’ said the metamorphosed boiler-maker. ‘What is the next question?’

‘It’s this,’ said Harry, after a short pause, during which he tried to screw his courage to the sticking-place, for the question was one which went against his grain. ‘Do you think that I possess genius, that I am really clever? and whether I have genius or no genius, will you tell me what is the use of this intellectual drilling, if I am always to be a blacksmith; it is of no earthly good that I can see, if I am always to remain what I now am?’

Ned mused for a few minutes, then replied with much dignity of manner—

‘Not only does your educational progress resemble mine, but the thoughts which have been conceived in your mind by it are precisely like those which haunted me while in the early stages of my transition from mental darkness to intellectual light. Before entering on the brief outline of my history, which I have promised to relate to you, and which I now find the more necessary in order to elucidate certain points in my experience for your future guidance, I will

first say, in reference to your second question, that I do not think it complimentary to call a man a genius. Large natural ability may exist in a man, but if it be not developed by persevering application to the duties of self-education it is useless, nay, worse than useless ; persevering mediocrity often accomplishes more than flighty genius. Genius without perseverance is like an engine without steam. There is, however, one fact which pleads very strongly for its existence, as a something peculiar to some people, and that is, that some persons may try, try, try, and never succeed in obtaining ordinary objects of ambition, while others can secure them by a little application only. I know you will say that all this is very trite and stale ; but I think it answers your question, or part of it. Now it is very certain that you possess the perseverance necessary to make a great man ; at present you are only ploughing and sowing ; it would be ridiculous to look for fruit in spring. You certainly do exhibit some fine intellectual blossom, somewhat blighted by social discontent. You should bear in mind that you are serving an apprenticeship to a trade in which there is but one master ; that

master an indulgent one ; one who allows you to make your own terms of servitude, and who has supplied you with a universe of beautiful materials. Why, my dear boy, you hardly know the names of the tools of an intellectual man yet : and here you are grumbling because you can't use them, and be remunerated for so doing. You ought to feel that intellectual culture, like virtue, is its own reward. You must know that the only articles which you have for sale are your physical strength and your knowledge of the properties of iron ; when you have something else to sell you will, no doubt, find a market for it, or else the laws of demand and supply are a nonentity. At least believe one thing for your encouragement, that is, as certainly as I do not believe in the need of all these efforts as at present made for educating the working classes, so really would I not have assisted you by pointing out what I considered the readiest way to make you a well-informed young man, unless I had perceived in you an intellect on which I could work with a view to improving your condition in life, always supposing that you are dissatisfied with your present position. Allow me to say that I see no need

whatever for dissatisfaction—I did at one time, but I've grown out of it—even supposing that you knew as much as Hugh Miller, Elihu Burritt, and Stephenson put together. For my part, I would just as soon shape boiler-plates to-morrow as I would play the lead at Covent Garden, with my name stuck over the town in letters a foot deep. Pass the bottle. Eh! here, John Thomas, bring a couple more. Don't stop to put the cobwebs on; stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once!

With this quotation the philosopher ended his speech.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

THE wine was brought and the empty bottle taken away ; the two friends remained silent for a few minutes.

Ned's discourse had raised many ghosts in Harry's mind ; skeletons of new ideas were stalking about the secret caves of his inner self ; symptoms of an insurrection against the rule of the blue-eyed ideal of his affections had shown themselves as the philosopher poured his army of facts, supported by the powerful artillery of example, into his soul, only to meet with a cordial welcome from ambition—the dominant power within it. He had often felt that his love would prove a hindrance to his success in any plan he might adopt. He knew the value of the time it takes to court a girl whose only recommendations are that she is virtuous, affectionate, and lovely. He had grudged it before ; he did so more than

ever now. He looked upon it as time irrecoverably lost for all practical purposes.

‘Quite abstracted, I declare; with Banquo I must say, “See how our partner’s wrapt!”’ said Ned, shaking him up. ‘Come, drink, it ain’t bad soup.’

‘The King drinks to Hamlet,’ said Hartley, with a faint smile. ‘Pray proceed with your story, Ned: I long to hear it.’

‘Once upon a time——’

‘Now don’t get on that game, my dear friend, but do tell me all about yourself.’

‘You really mean it, I see, so here goes. Oh for the doorstep of a big house in a dark street, with our heads under our pinafores, to tell stories, eh! Harry?’

‘Bother you.’

‘Oh! I see. Well, you will have anticipated that I was born young, although you are not aware that my mother was a very pretty woman, and a Londoner. My father was a factory giant, strong in thew and sinew; he came north. He was a rough-spun man in his manners, though he would have looked well in rags; he was a boiler-maker and a drunkard. My earliest recollection

of him is that he made a great noise when he came home at night. I afterwards found out that he made this noise in trying to walk upstairs without the use of his legs, they having as usual entered into a compact with his brain to refuse to discharge their functions, so that the poor man may be said to have been head over heels in trouble. I also remember that he came home sooner on Saturday night, and gave my mother a sovereign to keep house with; never more nor less, although he earned three times the sum—the rest was spent in drink. I was allowed to stop up that night until he came home. I never saw him all the week besides, for he went out drinking on Sunday morning, and boasted that he knew how to get served in church-time at a hundred public-houses. My mother was a very timid woman, very nervous and very anxious about my father, and myself. This caused her to do two things; teach me to read with a pin on a book with large print, and shuffle off this mortal coil herself.

Here Hartley interrupted his friend by saying—

‘You will excuse me for stopping you, but you said just now that you did not believe in the efforts which are being made for the education of

the working classes, and yet you teach me to value it before all things.'

'As at present conducted, I object to it strongly.'

'Then how do you reconcile your statement with your actions in my case?'

'This way, lad. I educate you on my own principles. I think you possess the intrinsic qualities which make it worth my while. I think that if you ask yourself the question, How much good has education done the working classes since educating them has been a sort of politico-religious mania?—you will see what I mean.

'A very difficult question to answer, you will say; but I think this is the way to get at it. Compare the men over fifty years of age that you find in the factories, men who were boys before education became the rage; compare them with the young men under and up to twenty-five years old who are to be found working at the same benches with them. Ask the older ones what they did in their leisure time before they reached five-and-twenty; then compare their statements with the actual doings of the young men at the present day, bearing in mind that there were

always a sprinkling of Shakspeares and Ben Jonsons among them aforetime, and you will agree with me that education does the working classes little or no good—always supposing that you try men by the standard of good morals and their usefulness to society generally. Does it make them better workmen? No. I have observed that the best workmen are sometimes the most ignorant of matters not connected with their business. Does it keep them from using foul language and telling disgusting tales? No. For my part I never could see the difference between a man's cursing and blaspheming who knew not Lindley Murray, and that of one who invariably puts his conjunctions and prepositions according to the rules of syntax; and yet you shall go into a dozen workshops and this shall be the only difference between them. Cobbett and Euclid can never make a man worth a straw.

‘ True, you may sometimes find an exception to the rule in the person of some young man with his hair combed behind his ears, clean shoes, and turn-down collars, who is either a Sunday-school teacher or a member of some elocution or music-class. In private life what better are they for their educa-

tion? This much. When at school they have been taught Hullah's or Curwen's system of music : they find themselves in a musical age. Instead, then, of playing skittles and smoking short pipes in the skittle-alley, or playing cribbage and smoking long pipes in the parlour, to the accompaniment of pots of half-and-half, and wearing their working-clothes with a change of shirt only, when they have done work they must put themselves into a shirt smothered in ballet-girls jumping through hoops of roses, made by a poor devil for fourpence, and a pair of seventeen-and-six-penny never-shrinking trousers, made by the poor devil's sister for sixpence, and so on with the whole rig. They will be swells ; and good people of the quaker tribe exult, and say, Behold the wonderful effects of education ! see how respectable they look now to what they would have done had they belonged to the same class twenty years ago ! It is all bosh. A man is not a suit of clothes. The man is no better ; he has simply exchanged the skittle-ground for the concert-room. Instead of playing cards he plays at bagatelle ; or he dances at the casino or the threepenny-hop with a girl who ought to be at service, but who

works at a trade, and never sees bed till one or two in the morning. Instead of calling beer beer, he calls it a gwas of pwartar; instead of saying a thing is big, he calls it tremendous. He may have read three or four novels of the Bronze Statue school, but in most cases all that his memory retains is half a dozen songs; and his only subject of conversation is the depwalable state of the English opewa. The frightful immorality of the workshops remains the same; and instead of a blunt rough honest workman you have a conceited fop, or an ass with his ears put back, his ignorance burnished with the rubber of learning only to make it the more conspicuous. So much for mechanics and artisans. As for the unskilled labourers and costermonger classes, I don't pretend to know much about them, but I believe all the education that reaches them has a special reference to a future state, of which I know nothing; in fact, I never recognise them either socially or politically. I look upon skilled labour and raw material as the stones, and upon unskilled labour as the concrete of the road, over which speculation drives the car of capital to Belgravia or Basinghall Street.'

When he had reached this point in his improvised dissertation he stopped short, folded his arms across his breast, and fixed his glance upon the ceiling, seemingly lost in profound cogitation. Harry was similarly occupied, a coal-scuttle serving as a point on which to concentrate his eyesight. At last Ned, who all along had been much more assiduous in his attentions to the bottle than his companion, suddenly awoke from his reverie, and in a voice which expressed the feelings of true friendship more than any words could do, he said—

‘Come, Harry, my boy, drink : Harry, you don’t drink, old fellow ; you don’t drink, man.’

It was quite true. Hartley did not drink anything ; but at his friend’s words he blushed, and drank another glass of wine, to assure him that he was doing well.

‘Shall I go on with my story ? I feel as if I could talk all night.’

‘Oh, do go on, please.’

‘When my mother died I was taken by one of her sisters, a woman who preferred paying the snob to the pedagogue, for I wore out more shoe-leather running the streets than would have paid

for my schooling, had I been sent. So that you see I had very little learning before I went to work, which I did as soon as I could hold a pair of rivet-tongs. Learning, did I say? no working man ever becomes a thorough scholar in my opinion. There is the same difference between the best of us and a real scholar as there is between a doctor's boy and Faraday in chemistry, or a bricklayer's footman and Sir Christopher Wren in architecture. We are like fellows who go to learn pugilism of its professors; we mostly learn enough to make us saucy and get us into trouble, without learning how to get out of it. Oh! be careful, my dear boy, for no human being ever uttered a greater truth than he who said, "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

' Well, my father used to come and see me sometimes, and when he did come he used to pay my aunt more money than would suffice to keep three urchins like me for the same time. He was very kind to me after his fashion. He would take me on his knee, and talk to me about my mother, who, he said, was in heaven. Bad husbands always talk like that about departed wives. He would talk about her till the tears

came streaming down his cheeks, the sight of which made me cry too. Then he would take me on his shoulder, and load me with apples and sweetmeats, of which I always ate enough to make myself ill, so that I always associated my father's visits with brimstone and treacle. He was a man who did good by jerks, and had spasmodic notions of duty. This went on till I turned twelve years of age; he then came one day to my aunt and told her that he intended to take me with him to work, adding, that I might as well carry rivets for him as upset apple-stalls for old women. I was delighted with this arrangement, and nothing could exceed my joy when I was introduced to a score of smoke-dried smutty boys in the boiler-yard as young Webb. My father was a ganger, and as he could box any man in the yard, and would always take my part, right or wrong, I grew saucy and careless as I became dirty and ragged.

'Things went on like this for a few weeks, when one night as I was going to my father's lodgings, my mate, a boy about my own age, overtook and asked me to go with him to the gaff. Of course I went. I don't think I took my

eyes off the stage from the time I went in till I came out again. I was fascinated! the next night and the next found me there, until I had spent all that remained of my pocket-money; this brought me to grief. One question engrossed the whole of my attention: how to raise the wind to gratify my newly-awakened taste, when one night I accidentally discovered the means of gratifying my desires without becoming a thief. I had to pass a theatre every night on my road home: the price of admission to the gallery was threepence. If I were a member of Parliament I would bring in a bill to make the lowest price of admission to a theatre a shilling, and thus abolish one of the greatest evils of the day—an ignorant theatrical audience; but to my story. One night as I was passing the gallery door, a boy about my own size offered me a check; of course I accepted it, and passed into the gallery of the theatre; if I were delighted with the gaff, I was entranced at the theatre: I felt that I had never lived till then. The next night I lingered about the door, and obtained admission the same way. I soon found out that there were others up to the dodge as well as myself; lads who not only entered the play-

house when they pleased, but actually sold checks at a reduced price to those who wished to obtain admittance. The way in which this was managed was ingenious. The proprietors of the place changed the checks every night ; they had six or seven sorts ; when a boy wished to start in business as a regular ' checker up ' he had to beg checks of that portion of the audience who left the theatre early in the evening until he got enough of each sort to trade with them ; he would find out which check was out for the night, and begin buying and selling accordingly. I never became a seller myself, though I've bought dozens of them for a halfpenny each or a hot baked potatoe.

' Two or three years passed away at this fun : I had grown wonderfully, when one day my father, who had gone to work at the iron ship-building for the same firm, missed his footing, and I found myself in a suit of black, purchased with the residue of the money obtained from the burial club after defraying the expenses of his funeral. Well, my ganger told the foreman, and the foreman told the manager, and the manager told the junior partner, and the junior partner told the eminent ship-builder at the head of the firm that one of the

hands had broken his head, and also intimated that the broken-headed hand deceased had left some bone and muscle in a partially developed state in their employment; and it was afterwards intimated to me through the same channel, on the same house-that-Jack-built principle, with the engine reversed, that I should be articed to the firm for five years. The foreman then told me to keep my weather eye up, and pick up as much as I could; when he ceased speaking, I felt that I had closed accounts with humanity, and was alone in the world. I became a sadder if not a wiser lad.

‘My mate who introduced me to the gaff, now took me to a concert-room at a public-house; it was a free-and-easy, and I was called upon to sing. I had ever a taste for music; so after a good deal of bashfulness on my part and a great deal of persuasion on the part of the company, I rattled forth the “Death of Nelson.” My auditory were delighted, and I soon became in great request; small cards, informing me that the pleasure of my company was desired at a select concert, held at the Cat and Bagpipes, were slipped into my hand.—N.B. No ladies and gentlemen admitted without shoes and stockings; in a word, I made

that worst of all discoveries which a young mechanic can make,—I found I had a good voice, and could sing a good song. Well, I went from place to place. At last the proprietor of one room made me an offer, which I did not refuse; it was to take the chair in his room on concert nights. My duties were to open the concert with a song, to give the waiter plenty of time to take orders, to see that all the toasts were duly honoured, and when the musical spirit flagged among the gulls, to sing occasionally myself. My remuneration for these services consisted of a commission of a half-penny in every quart of ale or beer that came into the room, besides an unlimited supply from the cheap side tap for myself. Give your minds to drinking, gentlemen, was my advice to all comers, you may be sure. I did not want for patter and a certain suavity of manner, so that I did the business to the entire satisfaction of the publican, who soon afterwards took out a music licence, enlarged his rooms, erected a stage, and engaged professional singers, retaining me as conductor. In the bills which he issued I had a line to myself, and was styled Mr. Harcourt, the favourite tenor. I was salaried at six shillings

a night. So much confidence did my employer place in my discretion that I was empowered to engage or dismiss the performers at will. One day a pianist called on me and asked me to engage him in that capacity, the one we had being about to leave. I knew the applicant to be a good player, so I came to terms with him; he was miserably clad; and told me that he had only just left a hospital. Now, experience had taught me that lending money to professional people of his description was like the beef which the black cook dropped over board—not lost, because you knew where it was, only you couldn't get it. I was about to refer him to the governor, a game I always played when asked to advance salary or lend money, when another look at the poor fellow's pale face made me determine to risk it; so I asked him to tell me what he really wanted; he told me the money to leave on a dress coat and white vest, without which he could not appear, and must go to the workhouse. To save him from the Jews I took him home, gave him what he wanted out of my wardrobe, and somehow I found myself padding the poor fellow with roast beef before I left him. Never was man more grateful

to another than he was to me ; he offered to teach me music, an offer of which I availed myself ; not, however, without paying him as much as I could prevail upon him to take for the lessons he gave me.

‘ About this time I date the birth of my perception of the beautiful. Lizz, who had seen better days, having been organist at a puseyite church and pianist at some of the nobility’s concerts, but had fallen a victim to drink, not only taught me the meaning of the signs on the music paper, but tried to impart some of the composer’s spirit. In this he succeeded. I began to see, or rather to feel, that the notes were something more than a mere mechanical arrangement for the production of so many variations of sound. The clearest proof that one is gaining knowledge is to feel one’s ignorance. I began to feel that all my former knowledge was as nothing to that which I had to acquire ; this feeling was destined to be further developed. My newmade friend procured me an engagement as chorister at the Italian Opera ; then, indeed, did I realize my nothingness, while listening to the master-pieces of the most eminent composers, executed by the greatest artistes. Ah, Harry! that poor musician gave me the key of the

Universe when he taught me to appreciate and place soul in sound. Having thus acquired an elevated sense of the musical, it was but a step to the poetical, and a jump from thence to the scientific. I became a student in the highest sense of the word. I felt as I suppose an angel would were he is confined to this planet, knowing the glories of the bright worlds beyond without being able to reach them. You don't understand me. I had hitherto lived the life of the masses. I had, as millions of others have, a world in the few things, people, and places with whom they come in contact,—nothing more. Thus, they know Brown the baker, they see a large figure six in his shop window for months; one morning it is altered to eight or nine, they immediately grumble about the aristocracy and the government who make the bread so dear; all their lives long they see no more, hear no more than this, they are politically—scientifically—dead, their parish is their universe. But the study of natural science and social economy taught me to attribute the change in price more to solar and meteorological influences than to the ill-will of the aristocracy, who, by-the-by, are often our best friends; more to the state of

:foreign markets than to the hatred of the commons, among whom, I admit, may be found our worst enemies. Now do you see?’

‘I do. Go on, please.’

Ned refreshed himself with two more glasses of sherry, and then proceeded with his lengthy narrative and commentary.

‘Well, finding my stand point so much higher than that of my acquaintances, I became very reserved, perhaps austere, in my behaviour towards them. This thinned the ranks of my companions; but what of that? could I not read, hear, or see the works of such men as Addison, Binney, Beethoven, Chalmers, Combe, Carlyle, Dickens, Foster, Kingsley, Shakspeare, or Thomas of Stockwell—in fact, everybody who now speaks or who has written the English language? Time went on. I became more and more studious: while I confined myself to music and poetry, I became completely lost in the imaginative and the beautiful, like a girl of seventeen with a half year’s dancing and her first beau—a very dangerous state to be in. I became rabidly sentimental, and had silly notions about refinement and cottage pianos. I took a dislike to my trade; the men were low; I

threw up my baton at the Hall, it was low; everything was low for about six months with me. At last I sobered down, and began to read prose works on dry subjects—the real ass's bridge to a self-educated man. Fortunately political economy was my first study, it saved me; if not contented in heart I became satisfied with my position in the abstract. My five years' apprenticeship had long expired, so that I was now free to roam where I would. My income from my trade averaged two pounds per week, my expenses under one, so that I could gratify my taste, and gave myself up to the study of abstruse subjects. I went about from one factory to another, never stopping long anywhere, and thus I became acquainted with you at Screw and Bolt's. If you don't mind, I'll drink to our future friendship.'

'I am afraid that you are drinking too much, old fellow; I don't like the look of your eyes.'

'Bah, who shall I toast, besides? Got a sweetheart I suppose, Harry?'

'Hem! are you married?'

'Now, look at me, do I look like a married man? in other words, do I look as if my head were improperly screwed on, or as if I had had a

rock too many in my infancy?' He laughed wildly as he put the queries.

'Why, no, Ned, not exactly; but do tell me what you think about it before you drink much more, for you know that I always think of five shillings and costs when I hear you laugh like that.'

'I know you do; and if you don't you ought,' for you have dragged me home often enough when I've got inspired. I'll give you credit for it; you stuck to your mate like a brick, old fellow.'

'Well, never mind that, you——.'

'Ah! I see. Then this is my answer—not that I hate women more, but that I love children less. First catch your hare—this you may easily do, owing to the preponderance of the fair sex over us of the rougher sort in number; there is very little trouble in starting the game in London. Go and post yourself on Blackfriars or London Bridge, between half-past seven and ten in the morning, and you will see several hundreds of girls going to work in the City; they return in the evening at eight o'clock. You know as well as I do how easy it is to make the acquaintance of any of them; how easy it is to get on

friendly terms with a handsome girl who togs to death on Sundays, combs her hair back as if she were in a state of perpetual fright, or turns it like a section of the sub-marine telegraph cable across her head ; she clears from eight to twelve shillings per week—some get more, some much less. They mean marriage ; somebody to keep them—a man with a pound a week is the article wanted. What do they offer to the men as wives?—Nothing ; they can neither scrub, wash, cook, nor nurse ! Intellect they have none. They are, indeed, fit to suckle fools and chronicle small-beer. As sweet-hearts, they can dance, dress, and wear their hair how they please ; stop out late, with unlimited latch-key ; will call you “dear” at Caldwell’s, “love” at Cremorne ; but know as much about laying a dead body out, or bringing a child through the croup, or any of the tender duties of a wife and mother, as a Lapland woman knows about making raspberry tarts. To be sure, there are the servant-girls ; but the slavey class are so frightfully ignorant, that a man must have a nerve indeed who could endure one for half an hour. As for the better class—those who act on the principle of sub-division of labour—they are either

all nursemaid, and can talk about nothing but india-rubber rings, cutting teeth, and little dears ; or else they are all housemaid, doing the stairs down, in constant dread of white swellings ; or else they are all cooks, who are always stuffing you like poultry breeders every time you go to see them. Differing in their vocations, they nearly all agree in one determination ; that is, when they get married they will never work so hard as they do while in service. I don't blame them, but I won't encourage them in the delusion.'

' Well, but don't some writer say that it is the duty of most men to marry?' asked Harry, pointedly.

' Quite right, my boy ; but I should advise that writer, whoever he is, to go to a military or sea-port town—take Portsmouth, for instance, or Chatham, where there is usually a large number of soldiers—let him go when a ship is paid off. Then let him attend the services of the church in one of the cathedrals a few times ; and compare these three branches of the public service together, on moral grounds. The Bishop, on three thousand a year, who says, Thou shalt not commit fornication or any other deadly sin ; and the poor

soldier, on thirteen pence a day, who can't afford to keep a wife, and don't find life in a barrack quite the place for the culture of the cardinal virtues ; or again, the seaman, receiving pay from the government which allows church-lands and church-rates to remain standing institutions of the country, while it forbids the poor to take the income which would save his soul from hell, by enabling him to live decently if he chose ; the bishops aforesaid having a share in the legislation, but never entering a protest. What is the consequence?—We have several towns filled with prostitutes. Passion must be gratified ; women must live. Thus we have thousands of women who annually sacrifice their virtue and their lives according to Act of Parliament, with the sanction, be it remembered, of the Right Reverend Fathers in God, who legislate for the nation as well as for the church ! The question then naturally arises—Why should not the workman, who feels that his limited income will not keep a family as he would like to see them kept, avoid the cares and troubles of matrimony and paternity, on the principle which is permitted in the army and navy by those who sanction and consider the marriage-

rite binding? Why should not the workman have a mistress?’

‘But,’ said Harry, ‘you really do not mean what you say ; at least you are exaggerating.’

‘Am I? I should rather say not. I act on the principle myself. It is the word mistress that jars on your ears, because the word is new to you ; had I used a plainer term, you would have instantly admitted that my practice was the practice of thousands in London.’

‘I never saw it in that light before,’ said Harry.

‘That is, you never approached the same fact by the same avenue of thought. You know the age of village-born beauties has gone by. Female prostitution has long since lost its Jane Brightwell, or Ela the Outcast charm. It is not all the doings of the son of the Lord of the manor of Rosemary Dell, as we sometimes love to think, after the manner of the time-honoured way of looking on an unfortunate girl—that is all bosh. One of the results of the modern training of our youth is to make them knowing, if it does not make them learned. It seems to me as if they picked up enough to enable them to walk on the devil’s highway, without taking anything out of

his orchard for which, if caught, they would be instantly punished. Thus, the young men of the day see a factory in which a large number of girls are employed. Seduction, with force, is imprisonment: they know this; and wait till a slack time comes in the trade at the workshop. They know as well as can be, that forty out of fifty will be thrown on the streets when they cannot get work. They make their market accordingly. The knowingism of the lads makes them look before they leap into the matrimonial gulf; and the knowing ones among them look longer still before they marry. They know that if they marry at twenty, as the bumpkins do, or even younger—they know very well that if the poverty which the act brings on did not compel them to live in unhealthy courts and alleys, which take off a good many of their children, that in all probability they will become grandfathers at forty, with a parish instead of a family to look after. But there you see how it is; and thus you get long articles in the papers about the Social Evil. Such thoughts have made me banish the idea of marriage entirely. I've had one or two silly half-hours; but I've given my affections an intellectual bath, and forgotten all about them.

‘ Well, as I said, the imaginative gave way to the matter-of-fact, and the matter-of-fact to the indifferent. I became a sort of man about town. I worked hard all day, always reading some choice author each night—thanks to Mudie’s library. I went to some place of amusement every Saturday night—thanks to the four o’clock movement. I could get orders for most of the theatres. I usually went to hear some crack divine preach on Sunday morning ; and to Cremorne with some well-dressed girl in the evening. I flirted a good deal. I got used-up to London. I had saved up a considerable sum of money, and determined to take the road for a few months. After purchasing a tourist’s suit, I packed up a few things in a small bag, and journeyed forth, leaving Babylon to the south. To be brief, I awoke one morning in M—— ; after breakfast I lit a cigar, and went strolling round the town. I thought I should like to stop a few weeks ; and determined to seek employment, with that end in view. I found a job, though not quite in the line I thought of. I fell over Lizzt, the pianist. Thinking that I was out of collar, he told me he could put me on three half-crowns a night, if I liked to go with.

him. It was to sing incidental songs at a panorama of India, Liza playing the piano. I agreed; was engaged, and met with a good reception from the audience. We did a tidy business. I had an offer from a regular crib in the singing line in the town, but declined to accept it. The audiences increased in numbers; my singing was taking.

‘One day the proprietor of the panorama drew me on one side, and after complimenting me on my vocal ability, asked me if I would mind to work the panorama myself. He then said that he expected a visit from two members of the tribe of Manasseh. Their business with him was strictly legal, so far as they were concerned, having reference to some bill transactions in which he had taken a part. He meant to make himself scarce. It was a pity, he remarked, for the panorama was now yielding a handsome profit; would I buy it of him, and owe him the money? Well, a false bill-of-sale was made out, ante-dated several months; all outstanding bills were paid up; and I became—or might become, helped by an oath or two, the bonâ-fide owner of several hundred yards of painted canvas. The

rightful owner crossed the Atlantic. Three days after he decamped, Moss and Levi appeared with a warrant for the proprietor of the place. They seemed to look upon the lot as theirs, and to fancy that they had done a clever thing—they had not paid the price of admission for nothing, they were certain. But it is not in mortals to command success. In answer to their kind inquiries about the health of the manager, I told them that I was never better. I was joking!—Never more serious. Without any more bother, I produced the tradesman's bills, all paid in my name—gas-company's and all. The elongation of a pair of nasal organs followed this display of managerial solvency and honesty. Where had he gone? To Paris, to see about novelties: I hoped they would catch him. They were convinced of that—their eyes told me so.

'I managed this thing, on commission, in one or two other towns, until my employer returned with an awful beard, moustache, hearing-horn, and blue spectacles with side-doors. Wishing for a change, I asked him to recommend me to his brother, the manager of a theatre at L——. Thus I became an actor. Thus I have briefly sketched

my travel's history. What do you say to stiff brandy and water, Harry ?'

Hartley assented.

Two hours later, and the two friends had risen from their seats, and were standing—that is, Harry stood firm, supporting Ned, who seemed inclined for genuflections. An altercation was going on between the two.

'I tell you I will pay my share at the very least,' said Harry, who was very much excited though he had drunk sparingly all the evening; 'I insist, Ned; we both work for our money, I don't want to sponge on you,—we will pay alike.'

'Fine principle fully developed in Yorkshire. Now listen to me: It's the first time for many a month that I've sipped with a man who wore his own whiskers even in an incipient state, or with an individual who wanted to pay his whack. That professionals never pay is a proverb, and a slur upon a tender-hearted honest race of men, who, according to the belief of all the innkeepers in the kingdom, wouldn't owe a farthing in the world if they could pay the money and keep it at the same time. I'll pay for the slight splash that we have had to-night.'

‘Fetch a cab, waiter,’ said Harry.

‘Ah, that’s right, my dear old friend ; do what you like, only let me pay. Harry, old boy, I’ve often told you when I was connected with the boiler-making interests of this great commercial country, that mind is superior to matter, but the bacchanalian experience of Professor Montague Villiers Leicester, clearly demonstrates that such a postulate admits of considerable modification, it only applying to matter in a solid state ; in the liquified form it frequently asserts and maintains a mastery over mind, of which I am a staggering proof.’

Ned had the singular gift of being able to talk coherently when quite intoxicated—a gift he shared in connexion with many members of the profession he had adopted.

The cab was now at the door. Ned discharged the landlord’s account, while Harry, assisted by the waiter, managed to get him inside the vehicle.

That worthy no sooner saw Harry seated by his side, than he jumped up, opened the window, and poked his head out, exclaiming—

‘Jehu, Jehu, driver of the car of light—I mean the light-headed—thou shalt drink nectar. Ah ! a stirrup cup. Take this ducat and drink to the health

of Montague Villiers Leicester, whilst he addresses a few valedictory words to the populace. Friends, rum uns, and countrymen: It is at least becoming in me, if not positively incumbent upon the son of a man who spent his life in propagating the doctrines of that great benefactor of his race—I mean Father Mathew—it is my duty, from which I never swerve, to inform this illustrious trio, consisting, as I plainly perceive, of a decayed female vendor of trotters, a memento of a lamented advocate of free trade, who according to the police reports furnished by the daily press, is an active and intelligent officer, and a potman without encumbrance, that those remarkable brothers the Waulting Woltigeurs of Wersailles, appeared at the Theatre Royal L——, for the complimentary benefit of that talented histrionic performer Montague Villiers Leicester; on which occasion that individual realised the sum of ten pounds in tickets, only half of which he expended in additional properties, and the remainder he means to spend like a prince. Badgee, the elder brother, supported the wertical—(I trust the wernacular suits you)—the wertical and cylindrical pole upon the upper portion of his body; Corpus

Cadgee, the younger brother, then ascended to the astonishing altitude of ninety-three feet, and then hoskillated between the eavings above and the hearth beneath—Badgee the elder brother, although hencumbered with the weight of his younger fraternal relation, perambulating round the stage during this hunprecedented hacrobatic feat; when to the hunbounded hastonishment of the hassembled thousands, the younger brother, after hexpending himself by is heyebrow, hexecuted nine flipflaps in the hariel regions while returning to the terrestrial horb. This hamazing feat has been seen by all the crowned heads of Hurope as ought to have silver plates in em—but——'

How long he would have continued speaking in this British showman style it is impossible to say, had not the cabman, in obedience to a signal from Hartley, remounted the box and driven off, much to the disappointment of the few persons who had collected towards the latter portion of the time occupied in the delivery of the actor's curious address.

When they entered Ned's chamber, Harry assisted his friend to undress, nor did he leave

him until the wanderer, who had not spoken a word since he left the tavern, put forth his arm from beneath the bedclothes and pressed his hand warmly, saying, 'Good night, old boy; we shall meet again at Philippi.'

CHAPTER IX.

BOTH SIDES OF THE CURTAIN.

A YEAR had passed away since the occurrence of the events recorded in the last chapter. It was a miserable winter's evening made of a fog, a drizzling rain, and a muddy pavement. The merchants had gone to their country seats, the clerks to their suburban villas. The artisans and labourers had retired to their respective courts, alleys, back streets, and two or three, nay even four-pair back rooms. The actors, actresses, singers, and dancers, on the contrary, were leaving their homes like owls to work, while others read, sang, danced, chatted, played, wrote or studied for amusement. Among this class of persons (who come from nobody knows where), whom it is found necessary to summons by advertisement when a theatre is about to re-open—but who come

from wherever they may, or go wherever they will, are always to be found at the treasuries of the various playhouses at two o'clock P.M. on Saturdays—among these mysterious people is Emma Adams.

On the evening in question she was making her way through a narrow dark sloppy street, leading out of one of the main arteries of the metropolis, on her way to the stage entrance of the Royal Blank Theatre. This she reached, and passed in, not unobserved by the Cerberus of the place, an individual who knows every county-court officer in the district, and every potman in the neighbourhood, in fact everybody who has or who would like to have the right of entrance to this portion of the Thespian temple. Miss Adams stayed a minute or two to read the list of calls which the stage-manager had made for the rehearsal of new pieces for the next day. A scrap of paper affixed to the wall by a small nail, gave them as follows—

‘SWISS AVENGER—Half-past Ten.

(The whole company.)

‘THE LOTTERY TICKET—Twelve.’

Having thus obtained the requisite information,

she walked through a corridor leading to the stage; the noise of a loud clapping of hands and thumping of feet met her ears, as she opened a side door and entered that magic room, in which a poorly-clad, half-starved girl can be in the short space of fifteen minutes transformed to a sprightly silvery fay.

It has ever been the privilege of authors to take their readers in thought where they may not, dare not, or cannot go in body; thus one will take us to the wild prairies of America—another to the swamps, lakes, and deserts of Central Africa—while a third will convey us by a few strokes of the pen into the metaphysical regions of dreamland and delirium tremens; to wit, the dreams which the heroines of romance always have, and the horrible mental sufferings which the drunken hero of a temperance story always endures before he sees the real beauties of that primitive liquid whose component parts are one of hydrogen to eight of oxygen. In the exercise of our prerogative we offer to share the cloak of invisibility with the reader, and introduce any charming young lady or crusty old gentleman (not yet initiated) to the charmed though knotty boards of an east-end

theatre. We take up our position close to the prompter's box; thus transgressing, for were we visible we should be fined in the sum of one shilling for violating the sixth clause in the managerial bye-laws, which showeth that any persons standing in the first entrance, unless engaged in the business of the scene, will be mulcted in the sum aforesaid. The first act of the first piece is over, the curtain is down, and the band is playing in front. There are a strange lot of people about us, some pulling ropes, others sawing planks, here a man carrying a house, there three men walking away with a forest, whilst another nails an avalanche to the summit of a mountain; another man is oiling the axles of the wheels of the dove-drawn car of the fairy queen to be used in the pantomime. But the larger number of persons seem to be engaged in loading their memories with something contained in a brown paper wrapper, which they occasionally draw from their bosoms, read half aloud, and return to its hiding-place. It is a manuscript part they are cramming, after the manner of schoolboys in the matter of geography who have played cricket in lesson-time; it is the first.

night of a new piece, they will be letter-perfect to-morrow night ; others have forgotten their positions in the next act, and are going through them in dumb show with those who remember their business.

The music ceases in front, the prompter takes his place, near him the call-boy in thin slippers. The stage-manager in plain dress, shouts out, 'stage clear.' The Babel of tongues ceases, and everyone betakes himself to the sides in an instant, the prompter touches a bell, the curtain rises amidst shouts of 'hats off, sit down, now then can't yer,' from the people in the house. The call-boy in the mean time has fetched an old man and a young lady to the prompter's box ; the old man wears a wig, which (to use a popular figure) bears a strong resemblance to that worn by her Majesty's coachman, while his gown reminds us strongly of a similar article of dress worn by the Lord Mayor of London on state occasions ; the young lady has a profusion of curls, some of which are her own, and a short blue dress with the front laced over a splendidly worked dickey.

'Which side do I come off?' asked the young lady of the prompter.

‘The door in right centre,’ replied that functionary, with a look of displeasure.

The curtain is rolled up. After a few introductory bars the two go on. Leaving them for a moment, we look over the footlights into the house: we behold something which looks like a bladder of lard with a fiddle at work underneath it: it is the head of the Costa of the establishment. Beyond him a sea of heads, all the eyes of which see nothing but the stage and the performers. Turning to the wings again, we find a larger number of performers collected there, conversing together in groups; they are all attired in that costume which we still believe (with the credulous simplicity of childhood) was proper in Italy in the fifteenth century. Leaning against a side-scene is Harry Hartley: he seems to be staring listlessly about him, in no way awed by the black looks of the costumier, who has an eye to the preservation of the rich blue velvet dress which Hartley carelessly rubs against the dusty scene. A man in a large slouched hat and long brown cloak steps up to him, and says respectfully—

‘I suppose we are going to have the fence as

agreed this morning, sir—the regular three threes robber cut and round the kitchen?’

‘Well, yes, I suppose so; contrary to orders though. Will the music fit? we can’t fight without *it* in this elevated walk of the drama,’ replied Hartley, with a sarcastic smile.

‘Oh, you leave that to me; I haven’t been here three years but what old cat-gut knows my style. I am very thirsty—should like to give you a fly for fourpennyworth of fourpenny.’

‘I’ll send for it, and save you the trouble of flying your halfpenny with the two heads.’

The call-boy now came to tell Hartley that he was wanted. Harry made his way to where a crowd of ladies were waiting at the door of a scene placed cornerwise to the stage. These ladies were all dressed in white, and had small baskets of flowers on their arms; they were fully prepared for an orthodox stage funeral procession or wedding-party; in this case it was a wedding-party. As Hartley approached this bevy of bridesmaids one way, the heroine of the play reached them by another. She immediately entered into an animated conversation with Hartley, from which a third person could easily discover

that Harry was the hero of the piece, and the lady his lady love; in fact, that the audience believed, or would shortly think that they were now celebrating their nuptials.

The tall man with the taste for fourpenny is now on the boards. In the play-bills he is called 'the Count de —, a man of blood and sinister intentions, by Mr. Brown.' He is telling the audience that he thirsts for revenge for slighted love, and that he will take this deep revenge in a methodical manner and a well-organised system of wicked deeds. The person on whom he determines to waste his time and talent is no other than the young lady who at that moment was enjoying a lively chat with Hartley. Having strutted and fretted his ten minutes on the stage, and made a few delicate arrangements with the first ruffian, he goes off grasping a half-concealed stiletto, stamping his feet and exclaiming, 'Blood-ah!—I will have her life-blood-ah!'

We have time to peep behind the scenes again. A lad has just brought a quart of porter, which Harry politely hands to his countess, who drinks deeply: he then sips it himself, and passes it to the heavy man, Brown, who is in a great perspi-

ration, brought on by his recent malignant declamation against the happiness of the man to whose health he now drinks and empties the pot.

The scene opens and the audience are treated to a very pretty view of the church of Rosenthal on a spring morning. At this moment the bells strike out a joyous peal from a blind man with a stick and a leather strap distended across two upright stands a few feet apart. Many of our readers will no doubt recognize in him an old street friend and public servant. The door is opened by a scene-shifter; the bridesmaids pass on to the stage proper, walking backwards and strewing flowers in the path of the newly-wedded pair, closely followed in their turn by the old man in the civic garments, who is the heavy father of the Rose of Rosenthal, the maiden name of the fair and gentle bride. A number of noblemen, vassals, and villagers close the procession, and slowly take up their position in tableau. A rapturous burst of applause greeted their appearance. Harry bowed low in acknowledgment, muttering as he did so, 'So much for our fine clothes; now for our acting.' Taking the two hands of the lovely Rose in his, and leading

her down the centre of the stage, he began his part thus :

‘My leong leost leovely one, at learst you are my eown. Let me feold you to my beosom—let me realize the feond dream of my youth, that you are indeed my own.’

The lady who had been playing innocently with the curls of his King Charles’ wig, and looking him in the eyes, thus rendered her author’s text :

‘As the ivee encleaves to the eoak, so do I cling to thee, my husband and my lord.’

Then pointing to the old man, whose nose suggests thoughts of grog-blossoms, she motioned Harry to kneel, as she said, ‘Let us eask a blessing.’ This they accordingly did, the worthy papa, whose breath smells strongly of the extract of molasses, raising his hands, arms, and eyes to the skylight over his head, and muttering something about ‘Providence,’ ‘gray hairs,’ and ‘happiness,’ as he noted the cobwebs and pulleys over which the moon threw a feeble light from the windows in the roof, the music playing a few bars of ‘The Heart bowed down.’

As it is the custom of members of parliament

to address their constituents during the recess, so it would seem (from the drama before us) to be the practice of Italian noblemen to address their agricultural tenantry as well as their more powerful retainers, on their respective wedding-days, in the churchyard of the baronial domain, after the religious rite has been performed in the church.

Harry remains in the suppliant position about two minutes after the conclusion of his father-in-law's invocatory benediction, then rises to slow music, which ceases when he consigns his bride to the care of her ladies, who take up their position near the church. He then turns his back upon her, and faces the crowd of noblemen, retainers, villagers, et cetera, et cetera. As it is not our intention to write a melo-drama, we merely give the heads of the topics which formed the staple of the Baron of Rosenthal's ante-breakfast out-door speech.

He had married the Rose of Rosenthal, the daughter of a man with a rough hand and a honest heart, in itself a priceless gem, a nobler dowry than any ducal coronet. (Loud applause from pickpockets in the gallery.) When he

looked around him upon their happy faces, redolent with health and sparkling with happiness, he asked himself what more could he desire, or where could he look for a similar show of sublunary bliss? Not among the shrivelled aristocracy—no! Labour was the parent of health and hard hands! (Loud and prolonged applause from the healthy sweeps, nightmen, and male and female costermongers in the threepenny part of the house.) What would become of the nation were it not for them? By linking himself to the working classes, had he not joined himself to the muscles of the constitution? Would he not uphold the rights of labour against the grasping spirit of the employers? Here it became self-evident that the author had made a jump from Italy in the fifteenth to England in the nineteenth century; for allusions were made, in a very democratic spirit, to the game-laws and poachers, to the poor-laws and paupers, exhibiting a want of local colouring and chronological accuracy, quite inexplicable in anything else, but which is tacitly understood to be proper in that kind of drama which has for its aim the edification and instruction of the English workpeople.

Need we add that each point was received with unmistakable signs of approbation from the hands and feet of the persons for whose delectation it was presented? In conclusion he invited all present on the stage to a grand banquet, to be devoured at the castle. This invitation is accepted with every manifestation of stage super-numerary delight, the countrymen rubbing their stomachs (outside), and the lasses holding the palms of their hands to each other and smiling: the noblemen nod carelessly at one another, as if roast bull's father and plum pudding were nothing new to them. At this moment the two men who *work* at the bass viols in the orchestra are seen drawing their bows across their instruments, thrum—thrum—THRUM! Look of surprise from all on the stage! Enter the man of sinister intentions, attended by four myrmidons; they are all armed with short thick swords with basket hilts: our hero also wears one on his bridal morn, but then the customs of the country: four of the noblemen are similarly accoutred.

'I charge the Baron of Rosenthal with high treason against the Duke of Parma, and do now arrest him in his highness's name!'

K

‘Where—where—where is your warrant?’
from the young lady who so recently signed
her maiden name for the last time in the vestry.

‘’Tis here!’ (Exhibiting managerial butter-
paper.)

The villagers run off.

The young Baron:—‘It is false as hell; I give
thee the lie in your throat, measureless liar! Base
varlet! you would blast me in the hour of my
new-born joy. Ere this bright rose has fully
bloomed you would snatch her from me, that in
thy base clutch the fragrance might exude the
more. But, no, it shall not be! Truth is my
shield; and were your name legion, and your
number equal to your name, I alone would meet
you arm to arm and point to point, for Rose, for
life, for liberty. Rose, fair one,’ said he to his young
fainting wife, who had fallen in his arms, ‘seek
ye the protection of Holy Church, whilst I—’

‘Never, Bassanio, my liege, my husband;
rather shall they tear me limb from limb. I do
not fear death; we will die together.’

She clung to his left arm.

‘Rum, tum, te tum, tum,’ from the bladder of
lard and assistants.

‘Seize him,’ from Mr. Brown to myrmidons.

Grand combat of ten.

We look on the wings again. Some of the villagers who ran off on the appearance of the armed band are rapidly entering holy orders, by getting into tonsured scalps and sacerdotal vestments. Two bass viols and two violins have been brought to the church door; the priests are ready, the prompter gives them the signal, they commence chanting a Gregorian of their own, accompanied by the fiddles [and their parents already mentioned.]

Notwithstanding the prodigies of fencing which our hero and his party are getting through, it is obvious that they are getting the worst of it. Two of them are already floored, and at the mercy of their fierce antagonists. Harry is driven back by the man of blood, and falls on the church steps; the villain’s sword is at his throat; his young wife throws herself upon his breast, dashing the sword away with her hand. At this moment the sound of sacred music is heard; the door opens very very slowly; the priests appear, one with a Chinese lantern, the other with a bill-sticking apparatus resembling a cross.

‘Holy father!’ screams the frantic fair one, ‘save us! save him! We claim the sanctuary!’

‘Stand back, son of perdition! Hurt but a hair of her head, round which I throw the pale of our most holy Church,’ said the transformed villager and bill inspector. ‘Stand back, I say, or fear the curse of Rome and Balthazar!’

Hysterical laugh from the bride, who leans over her husband’s fainting form—peal of bells from blind man—red fire in the organ-loft of the church—blue fire from the tomb of all the Rosen-thals—disconcerted look of the Count De —, who drops his sword—striking attitudes of all the ruffians—suppliant attitudes of all the nobles. Tableau—tune, Old hundredth—‘Let it go,’ from the stage-manager—and the curtain falls on the second act.

With the end of the next act came the last of Hartley’s work at the theatre that night, for a pantomime follows, in which he has nothing to do. Preparations are already being made for this; the transformation scene is nearly set up. An hour later, and we go down the steps into the mezzanine floor—that space between the planks and mother earth in which is found much of the

lumber of the place—here a coffin, there a chest containing dresses, there another full of swords, pistols, sham drinking cups, dessert service, and so on. To-night all this is stowed away as much as possible, to allow the machinists to work the tricks of the pantomime. A number of what seem to be tremendous oyster-shells are arranged at equal distances under the traps in the stage, waiting to be pushed up, when they have each received their respective fairy, into the world above. A number of these occupants of the large bivalves, or daughters of pearl, are waiting and shivering about the place. As the Queen of the Fairies has just received an *encore* for her parody song, they have time to talk together.

‘Come out of that,’ said the Fairy Sunbeam to the Fairy Dancing-water, who had opened and taken up a recumbent position in the largest shell, the centre one of the group.

‘Why so?’

‘Why so, eh! Miss Adams, or Missis Mortimer, will let you know that.’

‘Mrs. Mortimer, indeed; as if Mr. Mortimer would marry a minx like her!’

‘Well, I don’t know about marrying exactly.’

I suppose she is married as much as I am ; but she is Missis Mortimer for all that.'

'I don't believe it. Why there's our heavy line would give her ears for him.'

'Ah, she's wido ; she knows what she is about. Mortimer's got a particular friend—stage-manager in the provinces somewhere—wants the leading business there—it's her game to be civil.'

'Well, all I know is I dresses her, and I've seen things which make me think more t'other. She watches him like a cat would a mouse, and when he talks to her he looks as if he had a tile off. I've always respected him, ever since he joined the company. I speaks as I find, and I don't think that although he is so hand and glove with the gov'ner, that he blows a synable of what he sees, that I don't.'

'Well, I know one thing, and that ain't two, that ever since he joined the company she has had all the best of it. Look at her dress ! see the spangles and ribbon she got to what we have. Then see how she dresses when she's off ; why, when she first come she could hardly put one leg afore the other—now I expect to see her do columbine next season. As it is, she is centre

figure; she must be in keeping of somebody, and that somebody—but here they come.'

It was true; for Harry, when he had changed the dress he wore for his own private suit, had followed the subject of these charitable remarks down stairs, on his way out—for his dressing-room was on the opposite side of the stage to the entrance from the street.

'Well, Miss Taglioni,' he said, in a voice expressive of mixed admiration and affection, 'get this game off as soon as you can; I'll wait for you.'

She whispered, 'Yes, dear Harry.' Her eyes brightened as she said aloud, 'You will wait for me, Harry love?'

Wonderful is the power of love, but not more wonderful than the power of vanity in woman, as seen in her conduct towards her own sex, when a man who has distinguished himself among his fellows makes her the object of particular attention. This same vanity will make a woman disgrace her sex so that she may support some brute in idleness who has made himself notorious in the prize-ring, or as the chief of a gang of burglars. This feeling, or combination

of feelings, it is that often fills the outer passages of police-courts with weeping women; this it is that makes them wait outside prison gates for hours before the time of release, to bestow the money obtained by the sacrifice of every true womanly feeling on men whose hands are against every man, and every man's hand (defensively) against them. These feelings had taken possession of the poor deluded girl's heart, and made her glory in her shame; and yet how innocent she looks in her fairy garb, a model of loveliness and feminine grace!

'Yes, Em, I'll wait for you. By-the-by, did you see Miss Cleveland this morning? You know I spoke to you about her.'

'Should say I did; she is in the house now. Didn't you see her?'

'In the house; you amaze me!' he exclaimed; then collecting himself, he said calmly and incredulously, 'Bah, I don't believe it! This is meeting night at Beersheba; she couldn't get out.' He said this to throw Emma off her guard.

'Well, believe your own eyes, then.' As she spoke she led him to the door by which the mu-

sicians pass into the orchestra. 'Look up there, in the second tier. Now, is it gammon?'

There, indeed, was Bessie, with her eyes fixed on the stage.

'Step this way, if you please, Mrs. Mortimer; we have got our cue,' said the carpenter. And in a few moments Emma had taken her place in the gorgeous, glorious, golden groves and gardens of Golconda, garnitured with glittering globules of glistening glory.

Had Emma Adams remained another moment near him, Hartley would have cursed her where she stood, such a strange revulsion of feeling came over him when he mentally compared her with the virtuous, loving girl before him. She whom he once believed unworthy to be thought of with her was now over his head enjoying Bessie's misery, purchased as the enjoyment was by the price of her own virtue. This thought struck his pride, and brought with it a consolatory influence. 'After all,' he muttered, 'she is but a tool in my hands. I am getting quite maudlin. Bessie does not know that she is laughed at, or if she did she would not envy the fool her laugh. At any rate, she must guess that I mean to follow

the profession, and that, I hope, will be enough to break it off. Somehow I feel as if I never loved her half as much as I do now; but it's exaggerated respect, the result of contrast with Emma.' So thinking, he turned away.

CHAPTER X.

EXPLANATORY EXPERIENCE.

It is necessary to narrate the events which led to the circumstances described in our last chapter. The better way to do this will be to give the individual experience of each of the principal characters concerned, during the time which elapsed between Bessie's betrothal and Hartley's assumption of the part of the Baron Rosenthal. We begin with Miss Cleveland.

She was not much surprised when she found that Harry did not call on the first night after the fracas. She knew his hasty temper, and believed that he forgave as quickly as he quarrelled. She attributed his absence to a doubt he might have if her mother did the same; the next night he came not, and the next likewise. Sunday came and went, and brought with it no signs of the infuriated theologian; surprise deepened into

anxiety, and at the end of a fortnight's suspense a deep gloom settled on the young girl's mind. Her mother in a great degree participated in her sorrow; while she felt that she was somewhat in fault, she could not help thinking that Hartley's prolonged absence was reprehensible. Did he, could he love Bessie, and yet never attempt to bring about a reconciliation? Was the man who could sulk so likely to prove an affectionate husband to her only treasure? This was a serious question. Bessie, unsophisticated and inexperienced, and at that age when every wish is mother to the certainty of possessing that which we desire, never doubted his love, although this prolonged silence disclosed to her a new feature in his character.

Things were in this condition when one evening Mrs. Cleveland met Hartley in the street and spoke to him. Nothing was mentioned about the quarrel or its cause; the ice melted, and they walked home together, just as Bessie had fallen into that most-to-be-avoided state of morbid first loveism in which we think — think — think what those who profess to love us think about us. After this matters went on in the regular

jog-trot style for a few weeks, and then Harry became irregular in his visits: he¹ pleaded late hours at the factory as the cause. She believed this, though why overtime should make him so abstracted when with her she could not well make out. He always seemed engaged in the solution of some deep problem, and would allow hours to pass without uttering more than a few monosyllables. This went on for several months, during which time he never hinted a word about marriage, no matter how nicely she laid her little conversational traps to catch him on this favourite theme of loving converse with those who are engaged. He took his regulation kiss at the street door when they met and parted, that was all. She thought she had made a great discovery when one night he became more communicative than usual, and told her that he had had a few unpleasant words with his employers, which had resulted in his dismissal from their service; he seemed a little excited when he told her this, and as she thought tried to avoid her anxious look. This she attributed to his shame at dismissal, and the fear of her displeasure. After this his visits became less fre-

quent than before, much to Mrs. Cleveland's astonishment, who began to entertain notions of putting him through a catechetical process concerning his intentions towards her daughter, when Bessie made a discovery which put an end to all further speculation on the subject. It will be remembered that Harry had endeavoured to interest Bessie on behalf of Emma Adams. Bessie, fearing no rivalry, had made many friendly overtures to the girl, but to no purpose; the girl had evinced a sort of instinctive dislike to her, and would never place herself in a position in which Bessie could serve or advise her. More recently the girl had quite changed in her behaviour towards her rival, displaying a cordiality of manner quite at variance with her former manifestations of dislike; but, as the reader will guess, this was only done the better to carry out her designs and ingratiate herself in Harry's favour; so it was that with every outward sign of the sincerest attachment she communicated to Bessie the fact of Hartley's engagement at the Blank theatre, at the same time telling her of her own.

It was well for Bessie that she did not compre-

hend the magnitude of the evil which this announcement portended. She had orthodox notions about playhouses; had never been inside one in her life; believed all actors rogues, all actresses courtezans. That Harry should be an actor exceeded her belief not only of, but in him. Like other people, who declare the stage to be a monstrous evil, she would not attempt to deny that great mental ability is required among the performers. Bessie, like thousands of others, believed in the existence of a mysterious few called longheads, who every now and then start up to revolutionize society—people who invent telegraphs and railways, preach sermons for chapel debts, or write or act plays; but she never dreamt that Harry was up among them. How should she act? Should she consult her mother?—should she see her minister? No; womanlike, she resolved to go and see Hartley, first having obtained the requisite information from Emma, who seemed only too ready to give it. She determined to see him once, and only once herself, and then forget him. Ah, forget him! silly loving girl. Hence her appearance at the theatre.

With regard to Emma Adams, hers indeed was

a poor girl's story. As Harry had predicted, she made bad use of her leisure time, frequenting low places of amusement with young men—young men, too, who boasted to their companions of the number of girls they have ruined. Such lords of the creation are as plentiful in factories as they are anywhere else. A slight check was put upon her downward career by the demise of her father, who left the hospital only to die. In their distress the two sisters applied to Hartley, who was a great favourite with their father, for assistance, nor did they apply in vain. He exerted himself greatly in their behalf; he set to work, and raised a subscription for the orphan sisters, giving very liberally himself; he undertook to see old Adams decently interred;—in short, he did all that such a man could do when once bent on the accomplishment of a given task: but as no good is found without its accompanying evil, so it proved in this case. Harry's disinterested kindness deepened the liking which Emma already had for him. It first took the shape of real respect, then it became fondness and love. It was with a chilly sensation at her heart that she heard him say, when the mournful ceremony was over, and

the few friends who had assembled on the occasion had departed—

‘ Now, my dear girl, let me give you a little advice if I may. You are alone in the world now, and need a friend and adviser. Owing to circumstances, I can’t always be with you ; but I shall be most happy to do all in my power to serve you. Don’t you think now that if you could get friendly with some respectable young woman about your own age, that it would be a good thing for you ? There is Miss Cleveland now ; she works just as you do ; but then she has got a mother. Good friends, you know, are half the battle with young girls now-a-days. I’ll speak to her again about you.’

‘ I’ll speak to her again about you.’ How these words rang through her heart like the death knell of hope. She now knew why the fair girl had been so kind to her. Oh, refinement of cruelty in kindness ! She tried to thank him, but could not. When he was gone she became aware of two things : first, that she loved him more than life ; and, that Bessie was her rival. She determined to avoid them both as much as possible ; hence much of her shyness and reserve to

Bessie, the innocent cause of her jealousy and bitter hate—for such natures never do things by halves. By degrees the saddening effect produced in her mind by her father's death wore off. The sisters went to work at their trades again, and attended the same places of amusement as before: at last a time of depression came in the feminine golgothic business. Emma lost her work; her sister, a much steadier girl, was still employed. Emma for a few weeks was totally dependent upon Jane for support. This soon became irksome to her proud spirit. She tried every means to obtain employment, but all failed. Just at that time she was told that a girl with her face and figure might almost command twelve shillings per week at any of the west-end theatres. She applied for and obtained a place as supernumerary at a fashionable house. Being a very attractive girl she was placed on the permanent staff at two shillings per night. Her position was a critical one; from the stage to the street is a swell's proverb, and it is not unfrequently the fate of such girls. Fast men, with the *entrée* of the green-room, were already laying wagers on the accomplishment of her ruin. Painters' and sculptors'

agents, in the shape of living models, asked her to—or told her how she might—become one of themselves—thus offering her an opportunity of increasing her income ; when she suddenly resolved to become a dancer. To think with her was to act. Old stagers shook their heads, and told her that she should have commenced her career as danseuse in her babyhood. She was determined to try. She could only give it up ; she had figure and elasticity of limb. Her first step was to obtain employment at her trade again, which in the interim had revived. She then went and offered her services for next to nothing to the manager of the Blank Theatre, making it a condition that she should be permitted to practise in the day time and dance in the opening of the pantomime. Great was her surprise to find Hartley the companion and close friend of the manager ; greater still when she found that he rejoiced in the name of Mortimer ; but greatest of all when he called her on one side, and said to her, ‘ Emma, you know who I am. I’ve no reason to think that you have told any one else, and I wish to ask you as a favour not to do so. I know the terms of your engagement here, and have suc-

ceeded in getting them altered to your advantage. I am about to make my *début* here: if successful I shall follow it up, and perhaps we may—' He pressed her hand gently, but did not finish the sentence, only from that time forward he became very attentive to her. Her affection for him was real. She did not doubt his; had he not by taking up such a profession given a signal proof that Bessie no longer held an absolute—if any—sway in his affections? To what an extent she had returned his pretended affection with real love we have already learned from the conversation of the two ballet girls. Her name was still Emma Adams.

Harry bitterly repented his folly, as he now considered it, in making such a distinct and incontrovertible proposal to Bessie on the night before he met his philosophic friend. Ned, be it said, knew nothing of Harry's engagement, or it is probable that he would have hesitated before he communicated his views of matrimony, or entirely withheld them. His arguments, however, had very great weight on Hartley's subsequent deliberations on the matter; and such were their effects that in a few days after Ned's departure he determined to break his promise to the fair girl, not abruptly

but slowly and surely. He would endeavour to make it appear to all parties that she had changed, not he. But how to do it? this was the mental football with which he kept his thoughts in exercise. During that fortnight of painful suspense, so keenly felt by Bessie and so acutely appreciated by her mother, sometimes he nearly kicked it away altogether. Nor was it to be wondered at, for against the cogent abstract reasoning of his logical friend Harry sometimes caught himself placing the young, beautiful, affectionate, innocent, and loving girl. Especially dangerous did it become when he again visited the house in which she dwelt. Had he only seen her in the street it would have been but singly hazardous. Old associations of thought, old habits of action in connection with the very furniture itself, spoke loudly in her favour, and made it doubly so. Among these material aids to love none were more eloquent in their persuasions than the knives, forks, and teacups. These last articles absolutely reproached him with duplicity and inconstancy, as many a tea-service has many a man. We opine he certainly did love Bessie once, but then he argued only in a limited sense.

When he first became a suitor she was of the two much more respectable in attainments; now he felt that she was only superior to him in those virtues which he felt he could dispense with himself, although he admired them in her. He had out-grown her intellectually; the lion was now too strong for the silken cords which entrapped him, he would snap them. His standard of morals and character was rapidly becoming too low to let him feel the influence of Bessie's character, so as to produce feelings of adulation. And then again, as he came home from work, he beheld scores of dirty red, black, and white-haired children playing on doorsteps or in the kennels, while those of an artistic turn ground cherry-stones under a bung on the pavement; all his repugnance to the married state returned, and with redoubled force, when he thought of the fields and orchards which the children should have to gambol in. Say it was done, what could he do then? He had no object in life, taking her away; no speciality, as he termed it: what should he do? Acting on Ned's advice, he perused a great many standard works and text-books on various subjects. He felt that he was slowly acquiring a large stock

of information, which, beyond occupying his time while acquiring it, and the pleasure afforded by meditating thereon, seemed to be all he gained by so doing. Other people, thought he, get through the same number of waking hours as I do, and they find enough to think and talk about; to what end is all this learning?

He had always been a deep thinker. His varied reading had enlarged his views, and made him a logical one. He had ceased to be a simple intelligence, he had become a man of intellect. True he had but just surmounted the barrier which separates receptive from productive minds. But all who have done so know how easy it becomes to achieve distinction when once it is accomplished. In this condition he looked around him for some object on which to expend his leisure time and thoughts—something worthy to be exchanged for Bessie, whose place it was intended to take. We are not among those who believe that if Milton had been a painter in his youth that we should have had some exquisite pictures from the easel of a blind man in his old age. We mention this to remove the impression which may be gathering in the minds of our readers that we

are making an Admirable Crichton of the young blacksmith. Far from it. We do not think that any man can be anything he pleases—Spurzheim and Combe have demonstrated this too clearly; but we do think if you take a young man like Hartley, with no bias in favour of any study, and surround him with the elements and objects of any one of them, if he has a healthy body, without which nothing great can be done by a man whose scholastic education does not begin till late in life, that he will reach an eminence in any profession he adopts. Workmen acquire an earnestness and a force of character from the exercise of manual labour, which they carry with them into everything they undertake. When a vigorous habit of body and an industrious pair of hands are united to a clear, bold, speculative intellect, it is impossible to mark the boundary-lines of their achievements. That which the Cromarty rocks were to Hugh Miller, Ned Webb had been to Hartley intellectually. Morally they were widely different, but Ned had gone away again and left him the plodding learner he had been before. Ned was a rising actor; the provincial press was loud in his praise; and the thought naturally arose in

Hartley's mind that what Ned had done he might do. Why should he not be a player? he had face, figure, and voice, the usual, and in many cases the only requisites performers possess. At least he would try it, it would be something objective at any rate. He wrote to Ned, asking his advice and assistance. He received the following answer in a few days:—

‘DEAR HARRY,

‘I was drunk last night, and am therefore very philosophical this morning; I am writing this in bed. Last night I wore a crown and swayed the destinies of thousands; this morning I wish I were a boiler-maker, again wearing a cloth cap. Apropos of caps, I can see that my Paris nap hat has obeyed the laws of capillary attraction with regard to the cutaneous exudations of my head (super-induced by imbibing large quantities of gin and water), which has produced a fine configuration of the Andes range on the nap aforesaid. To quote an old shopmate, “I hopes yer ain’t a laberin’ under no deloodleum about the stage.” So you want to get on, eh? A very general feeling, by-the-by, among grocers’ prentices and the like.

You really must not put the wish you express to become a spouter down to the aspiration of an original mind. Now, my dear boy, I don't wish you to think me harsh, or as wishing to damp your ardour, but don't you think that you might try some other dodge to get a living without turning actor? Even supposing that you have the ability (which I do nothing doubt), if you want to make your tongue support you instead of your hands in these times, you must work at the curation of the ills which flesh is heir to, not labour to aggravate the moral sores of humanity, least of all, run your head at starting bang against a popular prejudice. For instance, how often do you hear of an actor getting three thousand a year for life? Never. The bishops do it, who don't work half so hard. But that, you will say, is beyond the question; there is no coronet in your family. Well, I read of an individual who takes two thousand per annum for telling people to leave off drinking beer. He is a working man. You may never be such a Triton among the minnows, but where such a sum is to be got by the star, other members of the company ought to be taking a trifle at the drum-head. It seems to me

to be a better game than making your face a painter's colour-board, and retailing blank verse by the yard, like a literary counterhopper, selling what people know you can't or don't manufacture. Eight hundred or one thousand a year are to be found kicking about among dissenting ministers, and men take it whose intellects are not a jot wider than yours.

‘So much for what you might do, and my protest against the life. I now proceed to show you what the profession is worth, and what sort of stuff your actor should be made of. To be an actor is to sign your own declaration of outlawry from all respectable society. Say what you like, the Cavalier and Roundhead spirit has not died out yet. Rochester goes to the play, Baxter to Exeter Hall. I mention this because it is the first thing you feel when you enter the pro. The audience makes the stage what it is, the actors do not make the audience what they are. Few of the people who come to us would like to take the sacrament (unless they were Roman Catholics), nor do they like the idea of sudden death, but would grumble at your want of charity if you told them that they were more fit to be transported

than to go to heaven. I think divines call them nominal Christians. O Art, how I worship thee I exclaims the voluptuary, who purchases an "Eve in the garden." O Art, how I admire thee! says the modern saint, as he stares at a "Greek Slave," or some other naked female figure. But Art, thy loftiest object is to copy nature truly in all cases, and surely Shakespeare did this in one specimen at least, when he wrote the description which the clown gives of the fat cook in the "Comedy of Errors." "Oh, nicety of distinction! Oh, finesse of perception! which can see no harm in the one, and so much positive sin in the other, and yet both true to nature." Well, so it is. Are you willing to take ground thus? If so, try the planks; but remember, that in the opinion of the vast majority of self-constituted judges there is at once a great gulf fixed between you and Shaftesbury. If I know anything about human nature and your character you will be satisfied with nothing less than excellence in your adopted profession; that is, you will imitate humanity just as you shape iron, on scientific principles. It is usual to make whatever we do a trade at which we can earn so much a week, this you will have to do it

is true ; but if you do that only, you may as well draw a cart, simply because you have animal strength and can get your food by so doing. You must love your art as you love your life,—in fact you must throw your best energies away upon it ; I repeat, throw them away, for of all the arts this is at once the most sublime and the most evanescent—the most ungrateful ; there is nothing less susceptible of lasting impressions than “the intrenchant air,” and yet if I were to say that the finest acting is only a painting done on it, the finest elocution and the highest vocal culture but air put in motion by a well-regulated machine, I should only use a common simile. If you do become famous it is possible that the schoolboys of the next generation will tinsel and paint you as Rolla or Richard, and you may, perhaps, when a gray-headed old man (if you don't die in the workhouse before), see your name mentioned in some review of the then present state of the drama, as *the* Hartley. But is this worth the labour of a life? if you think it is, why, devote your life to it ; depend upon it you will find it harder, much harder, than anything you have yet attempted, and you have accomplished much.

You have that in you which will both accelerate and retard your progress, viz, a strong will, which sometimes seems in the eyes of others to be only pride and obstinacy. Think seriously about it before you throw some of your most valuable time away. I do not doubt your success, but I do think that success, and satisfaction at success, while they are simultaneous, are not always enjoyed in the same degree by the man who perfects his design. Every object should be worthy of the effort made to attain it. That you may be able to judge of your powers, and have some practical proof of the truth of what I say, I enclose a letter of recommendation to my old friend the owner of the panorama, who is now lessee of the Blank Theatre ; follow his instructions to the letter, and be sure that he will serve you to the utmost of his power, and may the coal-heavers and costermongers applaud you to the echo, which shall applaud again. As for facing the house for the first time, I was about to advise you to join an elocution class at a literary institution, but I know you would feel disgusted with the snobbism of those who frequent such places (to the utter exclusion of those for whom they

were originally intended). Well, do what I did once, dress like a navvy, go to a teetotal meeting, give your experience as a victim of total abstinence of fifteen years' standing, offer to load a cart with any man in the room who drinks beer, tell them what you did not have, and what a vagabond you were to your wife and children before you signed the pledge; the more awful your condition, the better they like it; do this as a modest prelude to telling them what you have got now, and what an affectionate husband and father you are at present; finish with an affecting picture of domestic bliss, tea-kettle singing, cat on the hearth-rug, children devoid of ringworm; do this till you can count the people while you speak.

‘ Hoping to hear from you soon,

‘ I remain yours truly,

‘ NED WEBB.’

The perusal and subsequent consideration of this voluminous communication made Hartley determine to try the stage. If he did not like it he could leave it, a few weeks' trial would break up the humdrum monotony of his daily duties, it might lead to his bidding farewell to the iron

trade altogether. No sooner does a young man begin to ennoble the working classes by his gifts and acquirements than he deserts from their ranks, anything but manual labour for him. This being the rule, Hartley was not likely to prove the exception, he therefore called on Mr. Pericles, the manager, and presented Webb's letter of introduction. That gentleman eyed him from head to foot, then said— ;

‘ Have you ever done anything ?’

‘ Nothing.’

‘ What would you like to do ?’

‘ Anything.’

‘ Will you take a glass of grog ?’

‘ No objection.’

‘ Take a chair, allow me to hand you one.’

‘ I am much obliged to you.’

Mr. Pericles was one of those moral cripples who abound in the moral hospital of the world (if it is not altogether a hospital). When Harry put the letter into his hand, he received it abruptly, but the moment his eye rested on the signature, his whole manner became changed, he was at once affable and polite. The man who would cheat strangers and defraud others in

matters of business, never forgot his friends ; and he was too keenly alive to the value of Ned's former assistance not to feel himself bound to serve him in every possible way. Pushing a glass of whiskey punch towards Harry, he said—

‘ Mr. Leicester says that you are his cousin ; proud and happy to make your acquaintance, will do all I can for you ; I am no actor myself, not I, but your cousin is a fine one ; come down to the place to-night—here is a pass for the stage entrance, I reckon you won't get in without it,’ and he winked knowingly.

After a little small talk, Harry wished his manager good morning.

At night he went to the theatre, and stood for the first time upon the boards. He continued his visits each evening for about a month. Acting on Mr. Pericles' advice, he gave it out as a secret to one person in the company that he was the godson of the manager : this insured him the respect of the whole troupe, and saved him many of those disagreeables which all amateurs experience when they first enter the dramatic business. One night the acting manager put a manuscript into his hand, saying—

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‘ Mr. Pericles has told me to cast you for that part, it is a lover in a farce, there will be a rehearsal to-morrow morning.’

‘ Sharp work,’ said Harry.

‘ Don’t know,’ said the man, ‘ I’ve played twelve parts in a week, in the provinces.’

Hartley played the part and was successful. He threw up his situation, and soon after discontinued his visits to the Clevelands.

CHAPTER XI.

BITTERS.

WE left Bessie staring at the golden groves and gardens of Golconda. She recognised Emma Adams by the description which the girl had given of her dress that morning, for her pride had led her into details as mystical as some parts of the book of Revelation to Bessie.

Well, the clown said 'Here we are!' the pantaloon sneezed, the harlequin turned round six times in his own length, and the columbine stood on her toes and held the magic wand above her head, the coloured fires fizzed in the shovels, the flats were run on, and the transformation scene was hidden from the public gaze. The scene before them, represented two well-known marts situated in different parts of London; one shop, a clockmaker's, Bessie knew was an imitation of one in her neighbourhood: this recalled

her to the things of time and sense. The spell-bound girl awoke, and raising a thick veil over her face, which she had thrown aside when her lover's life seemed in danger before the timely intervention of Father Balthazar, she hurried out. She found a cabriolet awaiting her outside the theatre; she stepped into it quite unconscious of everything, only desirous to reach home and shut herself up with her grief, for she began to feel the reaction which always follows excitement and makes us rush to seclusion as the opposite extreme. She burst into tears, curiosity and anxiety gave way to despair. The first deep sad feeling of realized loneliness had reached her heart. The horse's legs and the cab wheels ceased to move, the jarvey jumped down, opened the door, and assisted her to alight ere she thought that she was near home, a feeling which everyone realises when they ride for the first time, especially in the dark. She gave the driver four times his legal fare, and for once in the history of civilization, a cabman was satisfied. She took a key from her pocket and entered the house. There was no person in it—how lonely, how wretched she felt as she threw herself on her bed

when she reached her chamber ! At last her great grief found vent in words. As the hot scalding tears chased each other down her cheeks she cried aloud—

‘ Foolish girl that I am ! why did I not see this before ? O Harry, Harry, why make me suffer so—what have I done to deserve this—why not tell me long, long ago ? I might have seen it, mother did. I loved him when I could not make him out, and yet I love him now he will not—does not—care for me. O mother, mother, would you were here to comfort me !’

She made an effort to rise from her couch, but sank exhausted on her knees. Those who have drunk deeply of the bitter waters of blighted affection can tell how enfeebled and inert the body becomes when the soul is prostrated by the loss of hope ; in a dark hour like this, what is all our book learning worth—what is the value of all our favourite theories of self-government at such a time ? ‘ They prove themselves unreal mockeries, juggling fiends, who hold the word of promise to our ears and break it in our hope.’ At last she summoned sufficient strength to rise and walk to a table which stood near the window. There

lying on it were her books of devotion, near it an old arm-chair, the humble altar before which she knelt ever since she had learnt the real value of prayer. She knelt to pray. She only sobbed aloud and thought of the Divine presence as an objective thing, something far, far away from her. Her lips moved in the use of the words which long habit will place in the mouths of the most sincere worshippers in their private communings with the Father of spirits, however much they may be opposed to a fixed form of worship in the sanctuary. In this way, as in the second prayer at a dissenting place of worship, the Queen is prayed for in due order, so Bessie by habit came to that part of her prayer in which Harry's name was always found. With most Christians it is easier to pray for others than it is for themselves. But when the poor girl interceded for her lover she felt that she only prayed for herself; she felt that this was wrong, although a pure-minded poet has said, Love is holy too. Many Christians pray when they feel that the Spirit is not with them, and they do this rather than break the habit of concentrating their minds on holy things. Like Daniel, they pray stately, in all states of

body, mind, and business, believing that the absence of the Spirit at such times subjectively in the heart is a test of their faith, in itself an exhibition of the soul's strength, gained in previous seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Bessie could not reason thus, her religion was one of feeling not of reason; the secret of the Lord is with those that fear Him, not with those who know Him by the deductions of intellect merely. She felt the absence of something which she seldom, if ever, missed when with her Redeemer. On former occasions, when minor troubles had assailed her, she had found consolation and advice in the Bible. She took it now with the hope that He who died so that the Book might be written, would say something to her through it then. When we take up any book to read, we always find something about it more than the author's words; something hovering over it, which it is impossible to reduce to words, but which we must be content to call the author's spirit. This is true of any book: it is not less true of the book which has God for its author. The Great Spirit who called the world from nothing, is in the Bible; or why does not the

newly-awakened sinner take it up as he would the Koran, or the Cosmos? Was Moses more than Mahomet, or Paul greater than Humboldt, the father of science, intellectually? We think not. It is the Spirit speaking through Paul and Moses, which makes the Bible so terrible to some, so full of love to others. How faithful is the saying that what you are to the book, the book will be to you. Bessie was not among those who expect that when they open the Scriptures the first words they see are those specially designed for them. A person well acquainted with the contents of an old well-thumbed Bible, can open it and find the plagues of Egypt, the plains of Mamre, Calvary, or the Isle of Patmos, at will; their own wish being the directing powers, like a pack of cards in a trickster's hand. How long will some persons in the Church of Christ retain this form of a belief in luck? when will they learn to understand the meaning of the words, 'Come now let us reason together?'

However ineffectual Bessie might have believed her prayer to be, the effort made to offer it produced a quieter state of mind—the sure result of an attempt at mental concentration on objective

facts. She had read but a few verses of that chapter in which we have the account of the great Sympathiser listening to the wailings of the sisters who had lost their brother, whom Jesus loved in his humanity as he loves us all in his divinity, and was getting interested in the story, on the principle which makes children listen to a story which they have heard a hundred times before. Wanting, as she did, the analytical power to extract from this sublime picture of the God-man's interest and sympathy with all that concerns humanity, yet those kind words of his gave a pleasure equal to her capacity for the reception of such feelings, consistent with the troubled state of her soul. Her bosom ceased to heave, the deep sobs became fewer as the pacifying process went on. While she thus read of the Master's doings, one of His well tried and faithful servants approached the house and knocked for admittance. Supposing it to be her mother returning late from watching at the bedside of a sick friend, she hastened to the door and opened it to find her old friend Miss Paris, the Sunday-school teacher, waiting outside.

‘Oh! do come in, Miss Paris; I am so glad to see you.’

‘Well, you see, Miss Cleveland, it is an odd time of night to come visiting—past eleven, I declare. So that you see, my dear, I’ll not only come in, but stop all night.’

Bessie’s face brightened as she said, ‘I expect mother in directly; but never mind, I can make up a bed for myself on the sofa.’

‘Oh, no occasion for that, child; your mother is going to stop all night with Mrs. B., and I am come to keep you company.’

Bessie led the way to her own chamber, and pointed to the chair in which she had been sitting. Miss Paris just glanced at the Bible and saw what she at first supposed to be some grease spots on the page; then she thought they resembled those places on a sheet of paper, from which ink blots have been nicely licked off; and then she came to the conclusion that they were tears. Had the song of praise been exchanged for the cry of repentance, or had Bessie been so touched by the pathetic story she had been reading, as to cause tears? From the book she looked up to Bessie’s face, and there the marks of grief were plainly

discernible. What could the matter be, tears at the time of private devotion may sometimes betoken the downfall of some favourite object of the heart's idolatry. What could the object be which had been so cast out? These questions puzzled the kind-hearted teacher; at length she said, 'What is the matter, Bessie dear? you've been crying. Come, tell me, there are no secrets between us, you know.'

'No, no, my dear friend, none,' said Bessie, drawing a chair close to her friend, 'I will tell you all I know.' And in a voice trembling with emotion, and broken by sobs, she narrated the events of the last few hours.

Miss Paris was an old maid, but none the less qualified on that account to be Bessie's confidant. She had devoted thirty years of her life to Sabbath-school teaching, and in that time had seen very many scholars married and settled in life; she knew most of their hopes and fears, troubles and joys. She was remarkably well adapted for this work, which is one of the most hopeful signs of Christianity in modern times. To a most benign, intelligent, and winning appearance, she united a large heart, a clear head,

and a creed eminently latitudinarian and charitable. She listened patiently to the recital of her pupil's woes, only asking such delicate questions as she thought necessary, to show that she was interested in the matter, or now and then to suggest a word to the poor girl when she wandered into some avenue of thought away from the broad road of communication.

Long experience as a teacher or district-visitor will give a person a sort of moral Blackstone to carry about with him. From this he can advise in any case, from learning a hymn for children up to obtaining a dispensary-ticket, or an order for blankets and coals for poor persons in the winter. The consequence is, that such persons always have a large stock of texts and axioms on hand, warranted to fit every case, and cure every moral disorder. Several of these suggested themselves to Miss Paris, according to the point of view from which she surveyed the features of the case. Thus she could have told her to set her affections on things above; that this love of hers was of the earth; or that a splendid opportunity had now presented itself for crucifying the flesh. Or, discarding the Scriptural mode, she

might have told her that it was a good thing she had found it out in time; and continued in the proverbially philosophic strain:—what was to be would be—there were more fish in the sea than ever were caught, and quite as good as those which had been caught already—don't take it to heart, it's all for the best—Mr. Right has not come yet—or you will find out the right one some day—save your tears for worse sorrows.

Miss Paris used none of this sort of thing when the poor girl had finished her story; instead of looking over her list of condemnatory epithets to be applied to Harry, and her catalogue of consolatory terms to be applied to Bessie, she only said, kindly, 'Well dear, we will talk more about this to-morrow, and then we will see what can be done to save the young man, for I think that he loves you only; some one has led him away: let us pray for him and for ourselves now, and then seek a little rest, for you must want it, dear.'

They then knelt down together and implored His aid who can tell what is in the hearts of men. After this she kissed her pupil affectionately, and retired to Mrs. Cleveland's chamber to think on what was best to be done. Although herself a

spiritual-minded woman, she believed in a goodness in the world as well as in the church. She had hitherto held Hartley in high esteem, on account of what she termed his Newfoundland virtues, or natural goodness of heart; believing, as she did, that it was as much instinctive, though more intelligent than that which belongs to a species of dog bearing the name of the great whaling station. She could not help thinking that Hartley had mistaken his vocation, for she firmly believed that if he had not run up against a doctrine of Christians, instead of Christianity at first starting, that he would long ago have been a useful religious man. Great indeed was her astonishment at this last form of development of Hartley's talents, but it was equalled by the astonishment she felt at the skill he had displayed in keeping it so long concealed, and the treachery he used in making it known, together with the breakage of his engagement with Bessie without any open rupture. While quite ignorant of the sinful relation in which Emma stood to Hartley, she had sufficient penetration to perceive that she was only an instrument used by him to bring about his own designs. The very caution which

he displayed in doing this, showed a wish to avoid a personal explanation of his conduct; this bespoke respect for Miss Cleveland, or it might be only a feeling of shame at having promised so much and performed so little. Whatever might be the causes which actuated him, she determined to reclaim him if she could, and so bring about the union of the two young people in whose welfare she took a more than ordinary interest. There was one way by which she could obtain information as to his movements—she was acquainted with Jane Adams, and report said that she was about to be married to Sam Waters; she would make inquiries the next day, and on the result she could base a plan of action for the future.

CHAPTER XII.

A LOVE SCENE.

THREE years and a half have rolled away. The tailors' fashion cards have had to bear witness to many changes in the outward appearance of highly civilized humanity of the masculine gender ; in that period paletots have been superseded by Noah's ark coats, and tight fits have given way to pegtop trousers. History has not been idle, for she has had to record the doings of our brave countrymen in the East, at Inkermann and Balaclava. We mention these matters as a sort of preliminary to the introduction in this part of our tale of a gentleman habited in the prevailing mode, and who has had some share in those heroic deeds of arms, the memory of which is enshrined as a sacred thing in the heart of every true Briton, and therefore requires no comment from us. Captain Leclerqe was mounted on a spirited

charger, who was sauntering along a road a few miles south of London. There is a great alteration in his personal appearance; he has allowed his whiskers and moustache to grow at their own sweet will, and to such an extent that with a deep sabre cut on his forehead, he has quite a ferocious aspect. He was in deep thought, and the noble beast on which he rides seems to sympathize with him, for he only walks slowly along bowing his fine head and arching his neck as if he too had a studious turn; the Captain's musings were on this wise:

‘I wonder now if my cousin Isabel will think any better of me. She used to say that none but the brave deserved the fair, while we lay at home in barracks, and was always hinting about feather-beds and club-houses. It's true I never could get more than a little squeeze of the hand from her, not even the night before I went away, and then she put a strong emphasis on cousin. As for the old boy, the death of my brother, and the succession being settled all right on my side, would buy twenty harder monkeys than he, but then Isabel always read the articles of war to me about my speech, my habits and religion, as if a soldier could drill himself to such a state of

efficiency as to be always ready to take the field against grim death, or what's a thousand times worse, a squadron of university professors. If Jones is to be believed, she is more a blue than ever now ; has got enough shells and stones of different kinds to fortify a town or build a dozen redoubts, and those gents receive the most smiles who do the most sapping and mining in search of them, or who have the largest collection of black-beetles and butterflies bayoneted on cardboard. Then she has taken it into her head to keep a book, and bothers everybody for ragged schools ; she is quarter-master of one they say, and is everlastingly dressing dolls, and making shell baskets and alpine valleys to sell for them, so that altogether the position seems impregnable for a fellow like me, especially if my fortune only lay in my sword-knot. Well, faint heart never won fair lady, or as the fellow says at Newmarket, twenty can play as well as one, one can play as well as twenty. I shall lay my stakes on the blue, and hope she will prove the winning colour.'

Pursuing this train of reminiscence and comment, the Captain reached and dismounted at the outer gate of a large detached house, built in the Eliza-

bethan style. It was quite a modern erection, and stood a great distance from the road, so that the warrior had to pass through a long avenue of trees before he came to it; this he did, leading his horse by the bridle. As he approached the house an aged servant in livery came out to meet him, who after looking very hard at him for a few moments, held out his hand, but instantly withdrew it, as he exclaimed, 'God bless me, it's master Charles! I am so glad to see you, sir, you can't think.'

'And I to see you, George, old fellow,' said the Captain, who did not see why a difference in rank should prove a preventive to the enjoyment of a hearty shake of the hands with a grateful countryman, 'come tip us your mauley, George. Is my uncle at home?'

'He is somewhere about the grounds. Miss Isabel is in the museum; shall I run and tell her?'

'Then, ah! you had better take my card up to her. You are a very sensible fellow, George. I shouldn't have thought about it, if you had not. There, cut away—march.'

The old servant handed the Captain's horse over

to the care of a groom, and took his departure, not before he had bestowed an approving look on his master's nephew. The Captain strolled into the drawing-room and threw himself on a lounge, and began tapping his boots with the butt end of his riding whip.

Isabel Clinton, the niece of the owner of the house and grounds, and cousin to Charles Leclercq, was one of those women to whom the term magnificent truly applies. Tall and stately, almost regal in appearance, being symmetrical in form and graceful in action; her face too intellectual to be called lovely, was rigidly, coldly, classically handsome; her abundant and luxuriant black hair, worn plain in front and thrown back so as to bring a mass of ringlets over her shoulders, made her appear both simple and singular.

At the time of the Captain's arrival she was seated in her museum,—the name she had given to a little edifice, the oriental appearance of which contrasted strangely with the architectural style of the house itself, from which it stood a short distance,—a long trellis-work passage forming the means of communication between them. The interior of the building and its contents were of a

character to justify its fair mistress in bestowing such a name upon it and them. It consisted of a large room heptagonal in form, each wall being devoted to some one science, the centre being occupied by a circular bookcase, containing a valuable collection of standard works and books of reference. It was lighted from the roof, a number of different coloured blinds being arranged so that the owner could with the slightest effort draw either of them across the light she pleased ; it was provided with a wooden shutter, so as to entirely exclude the light when found necessary for the observation of chemical phenomena.

The occupant of this abode of the angels (as some one has very properly called the sciences, for they speak of God's love as plainly as did those angels who spoke to the shepherds who kept watch by night), was seated at a small table with a microscope in one hand through which she looked upon a flower she held in the other ; a slight tap at the door, followed by the entrance of her maid, disturbed her in her botanical investigations.

‘ Well, Rosa ?’

‘ A card, Miss Clinton.’

‘A card! let’s look. Charles Leclerqe, cousin Charley, show him in; but no—stop a minute.’ Then, as if ashamed of exhibiting so much feeling, she resumed her seat, took up the flower with a trembling hand, and went on dissecting after the manner of cooks with cabbages. After a pause of some moments she asked, ‘Did the Captain—did Captain Leclerqe give you that card?’

‘I had it from George, Miss.’

‘Send for George.’

George soon appeared, and explained the circumstances of the case.

‘Well, say I will come directly.’

Both the domestics retired.

‘So so, cousin Charley; been in England a month; when you come you send your card up, do you? I shouldn’t have thought that the squiredom of Etheridge would have made a plain fellow like you proud, that’s not it; why there was a time when you would have battered the door in, and thrown all my books on to the lawn, but what you would be where I was. Perhaps your attachment is becoming sincere. Absence makes the heart grow fonder they say. Ah, I have it; it’s tit for tat. I did not go with uncle to see him

land, and this is the way. Bravo, Charley ; well done.' As she gave utterance to these words of approval, she threw down the flower, microscope and all, and in a few moments was folded in her cousin's arms, experiencing the pleasant unpleasantness of being kissed by a rough beard and thick moustache.

When the first salutations of a cousinly kind were over—for Miss Clinton would have protested that they were nothing more—she said, 'Well—and how did you like campaigning, Charley?'

'Well,' replied the hero, 'it wouldn't do to say I liked it, for I didn't, but it was all the better for those cases of brandy you sent out to us. Mind, though you said they were sent by uncle, I didn't believe it, and told the fellows so.'

'If I sent it what then? it was a cousin's duty to study a cousin's tastes under the circumstances. I've known you had a taste that way ever since I found out why you insisted that uncle's house-keeper in town should always deal with one greengrocer.'

'A greengrocer!' exclaimed the Captain; and what could be seen of his face reddened deeply.

'Yes, a greengrocer; the one that used to bail

you out when you got into trouble as Mr. John Smith. There, you see I know all about it ;' and she laughed till the tears came in her eyes, which made the poor fellow's confusion all the more apparent because all the more complete.

After a while she said, ' Well, what toasts did you drink in the cold, Charley ?'

' Old England was one, and the Queen the other, I think.'

' Think, eh ! I always thought it was the girl I left behind me.'

The truly brave Captain saw that he had lost a fine opportunity of proving himself a gallant one, so he tried to redeem himself by saying that he did not know that he had the privilege of putting the definite article before any young lady's name, although he added that he hoped one day to deserve permission to put it before Isabel Clinton.

Isabel was standing with her foot on the fender, her elbow resting on the mantel-piece, looking at the Captain reflected in the chimney glass, while he said this ; so that she enjoyed his confusion, while he was quite unable to see her face during

this confession of something stronger than cousinly affection.

When he looked up from the lounge on which he was sitting, Isabel seemed to be comparing the time by her watch with that of the small dial on the side table. She looked as calm and collected as if she had not heard a word he had uttered. How much do true men suffer when treated thus!

‘Ten minutes to twelve I declare. I expect Mr. Hartley at twelve, and he is very punctual. I wonder where uncle is? Will you take luncheon, cousin?’

The Captain would take luncheon; shared in his cousin’s wonder as to his uncle’s whereabouts; but had not the pleasure of Mr. Hartley’s acquaintance, had never heard his name before.

‘Oh, Mr. Hartley—he is a young man who comes here sometimes to consult uncle about a ragged school and reformatory that we are mixed up with.’

‘Oh!’

‘Yes, he is a self-educated workman. I don’t mean that he has learnt ciphering on a kitchen door by the aid of a dozen potatoes and a bit of

chalk, but he really is a young man of very considerable attainments.'

'You take an interest in him; that is, you patronise him.'

'No; like other clever people in his station of life, he seems imbued with a thorough contempt for all that money makes people in the eyes of those who measure each other by nothing else.'

'A democrat—a chartist, then?'

'No; one who loves his Queen and country as much as you do, coz; and so far from a blating demagogue, he inclines to the misanthropical. I think at least he is very reserved in his speech, though I must admit very prompt in action. It is true he sometimes becomes quite animated in conversation, especially when we are with each other.'

'I see; a sort of Claude Melnotte. If I did not believe that you are a strong-minded woman, I should say Beware, Isabel.'

'To be frank, cousin; whatever I may think about this young man, I feel certain that he cares nothing for me; indeed, I do not think that he is susceptible of any of the softer feelings.'

'Then he will never make a soldier.'

‘ And further, Charley, there is this difference between Bulwer’s villain and this man : that in the one case Claude assumed a false position ; this Hartley makes no attempt at concealment. He can look and act the gentleman to perfection in a public room, though he is sadly wanting in the courtesies of private life—one of his reasons for avoiding indoor society, I think.’

‘ I’ve nothing to say against the class to which he belongs ; in fact, nothing to say in the matter, beyond that it is rather strange to find one of them here : and since you know so much about my wild oats sowing, I don’t mind telling you that I once got a lesson in my duties as an officer and a gentleman that I shall not easily forget.’

‘ Pray kill time.’

‘ Well, you must know that I was out with a couple of chums late one night. We had been taking iced lemonade at the docks, and were afflicted with a touch of visual multiplication, as Jones calls it, in consequence ; I was rather more sober than the other two, owing, I suppose, to the fact that I was a veteran at it, not because I had less to drink. We had just been turned out of a tavern. We were rolling about the street

unable to stand, that is, they pulled me about rather more than I liked. At last we came upon an old woman, and tried to make her support the whole guard of us. She screamed for assistance; it appeared in the shape of a gentlemanly-looking fellow, who sent two of us flying before he discovered that we were drunk. I offered to stand treat and be friendly when he found out his mistake, but he asked me to give the money to the poor woman instead. I never felt so much ashamed of myself in my life.'

'And how do you know that he was not a gentleman the same as Jones and the other?' asked Isabel, sarcastically.

'Well,' replied the Captain, looking on the carpet as he spoke, 'his hands were as hard as iron, and there was something in his manner, you know.'

'Exactly.'

'Isn't that uncle in the shrubbery?'

As the Captain made the question, which his eyesight answered in the affirmative before he put it, he stepped out of a glass doorway; in doing so he was met face to face by the subject of the foregoing conversation. The two young men

exchanged looks of inquiry. Isabel moved quickly forward, and calling to the Captain, who turned back in answer to the summons, she at once introduced them to each other. At this moment Mr. Clinton came, and the three gentlemen were at once engaged in conversation. Leaving them, Isabel re-entered the room with a quick step, touching a bell which stood upon the table in the middle of the room. The door was soon after opened by George, to whom Isabel gave the following instructions in a very rapid though distinct manner : ‘ Get those old-fashioned vases out of Mr. Clinton’s library. Take them into the museum. Tell gardener to cut me two large bouquets of his choicest flowers. Send Rosa to me instantly.’ George departed.

When Rosa came, she said, in a rapid undertone, ‘ Rosa, you must assist me. I am behind time. Rush into the museum ; pull the deep red blind across the light : arrange the flowers in the vases, which George and the gardener will bring you. Take two or three theological works from the bookcase, those opposite the door. You will see the word “Concordance” written on one of them. Be sure you put that out. Then in the table

drawer you will find a manuscript sermon ; lay that on the table as well. Mind you open it. When all this is done bring me a key or something, but don't speak. I don't think that I shall wear that silk any more ; so be quick, and be careful.'

She then went to the door again, and signalled to Hartley with her kerchief, who walked quickly up from where the gentlemen had strolled while talking. Isabel offered her hand. Hartley took it in his, and held it a little longer than is usual for old friends to keep each other's, while he made those inquiries which sin has made necessary since the exodus of our first parents from Eden. They entered the drawing-room together. She motioned him to a seat, and began chatting to him about her dear cousin the Captain, who she said was as brave as a lion, and as rich as a nabob. A scarcely perceptible frown passed over Hartley's brow as she said this, which she nevertheless noticed as she went on sketching the Captain's doings in the East, finishing by asking him if he held peace principles.

'No, Miss Clinton, I do not. I am too passionate to be a peace man.'

‘Too courageous, you mean. Do you remember rescuing a poor woman from the ill-usage of some drunken men some few years ago?’

She put this question at hap-hazard.

‘Can’t say I do.’

‘One of the persons gave you a card.’

‘Oh, ah! yes, I remember; but that was nothing—a mere drunken brawl. May I ask how you know anything about it? I never told any one myself.’

‘May I ask questions instead of answering them?’

‘Yes, as many as you please.’

‘Where had you been that evening? It was very late.’

‘I had been to see a friend. It was just twelve.’

‘A lady or a gentleman? Young or old.’

‘A young lady.’

‘Then you have been in love, Mr. Hartley.’

‘I once courted a pretty girl, Miss Clinton.’

‘You won her, of course?’

‘I am a bachelor now.’

‘Inconstant?’

‘A man does not want the images from the twelfth cake that he loved when a child.’

‘ I think I see.’

At this moment Rosa entered and placed a key on the table. When she had gone, Isabel said to Hartley in a gay tone—

‘ You are fond of science and art. Come and look at my collection.’

‘ But I shall be lost. I am not fit to give an opinion.’

Isabel held up her finger playfully.

‘ No remonstrance. You must come,’ she said, as she led the way to the museum.

As they passed through the trellis-work passages, they were seen by the Captain, who muttered to himself—

‘ There goes that Hartley: the fellow will take the mosque by storm, and the owner prisoner. I would rather face a dozen Redans than that infernal place, with its ologies and rubbish.’

Isabel’s orders had been obeyed to the letter. Pointing to a chair opposite to the one she had previously occupied, she sat down; and as if Hartley’s production—for such it was—was more interesting to her than anything in the place could be to him, she called his attention to it by saying—

‘I’ve read your sermon, Mr. Hartley, and I must admit that you have done ample justice to the text which you did me the honour to allow me to select; indeed, you have exceeded my expectations, sanguine though they were. During fifteen years of intelligent perception of the truth, and that makes me twenty-five—I don’t wear specs yet—I’ve heard about fifteen hundred sermons in that time; so that you see, having a somewhat retentive memory for fine thought, I’ve been able to compare yours with those of others, and I must add that in no case does it lose by the contrast.’

Poor Hartley! the subdued red light from above, the richly-ornamented vases, the beautiful flowers, the maps, globes, chemical apparatus, and the splendid geological, entomological, and botanical specimens were doing their work on his ambitious brain. Had he lived to hear such an eulogium pronounced on his laboured production in such a place as this by such a woman! There was but another step to the summit of all his hopes. He must possess her; she must be his wife; and then——

The lovely sybil had worked her spell, but not

sufficiently for her purpose; for she continued, though she seemed afraid, to look at her victim:

‘ You write like an enthusiastic devotee. I knew you would upon your own confession. You are but a young convert to the sublime truths of Christianity, and I know of no subject so calculated to draw out the imaginative and beautiful in a person in your state as that contained in the words, “Have your conversation in Heaven!” You will excuse me, but I think that when you know more of the church militant you will give it less of the character of the church triumphant than you have done here.’

‘ You would not limit the power of grace, seconded by human intellect and perseverance?’ said Hartley, with an expression of indecision upon his open countenance.

‘ No; certainly not. Excelsior. You cannot aim too high. Be ye also perfect, is a Divine behest capable of the broadest construction. But this is what I mean: I think that you, who have described so beautifully the effects of grace upon the human soul, would be rather surprised to see the person in whom grace had effected most. You are too poetic—too enthusiastic. For instance,

here is a passage which you will allow me to read in support of my opinion : “ If it is the work of grace to restore man to the sinless state of Adam ere his fall, and even to bestow on man the privilege and enjoyment of those devotional feelings which arise out of the exercise of faith in the accomplished work of Christ, which were unknown to the first man while obedient—if when the Christ of God was sacrificed for man’s transgression the curse was literally removed from those who were disobedient, and men were permitted to hope for glorification through sanctification, to be obtained through the same all-sufficient atonement—understanding this to be a fact in the history of earth, a truth in the records of heaven,—we look around us for those men who have realised these sublime teachings of the Book, and we look in vain. All men in the Church realise them objectively as facts, many men in the world do the same ; few are they who live them as a life. And in this extremity we look to woman, to confirm by her conduct our belief in these matters. Wherever Christianity has thrown its benign and holy influences, woman has gradually reassumed the characteristics of the sweet and lovely compa-

nion of our great progenitor. What earthly picture can present such charms to the eyes of a regenerated soul as that of a young and lovely maiden, who to natural virtues adds the superinduced graces of Christianity, the virtues spiritualised of the mother of us all? When such a heart is found to give tone to a head in the possession of comprehensive views of Divine truth, and much information of a secular description, we say that when we see such works of the Divine Spirit, we think that humanity could almost forgive Eve her sin against it, while it at least can exclaim with gratified admiration, "Behold the nearly completed idea of the Son of the second Eve, the wife of the poor carpenter of Nazareth." Now,' continued Isabel, 'if you were to ask me who I think is the most spiritual member of our church, I should answer Mrs. Brown, a dumpy Dutch-built old lady, very deaf and asthmatical, whose chief earthly indulgences are green tea and snuff. And yet, when you are with her, you forget all about her asthma and snuff, because you feel that you are in the presence of one of higher attainments than yourself. Now, Mr. Hartley, compare her if you please—this deaf old woman in a cloak and speckled

straw bonnet—with your ideal, dressed in white for confirmation. No,—no,' she added, laughing, 'your ideal is a myth, unless she is consumptive.'

'I used to think her a myth, but I do not now,' said Hartley, his face flushed, his eye flashing, and his lip quivering.

'No!—why not?' asked Isabel, looking radiant with the excitement brought on by the delivery of this exposition of her views.

'Because my love of the beautiful in nature and art is of an earlier date than my religious life; it began, lady, in the fields which surround this house, when I used to leave the smithy on Sundays to wander alone among the green hills of Surrey. The engravings in the shop-windows next took my attention, and never did one appear anywhere from London Bridge to Regent Circus which did not receive the humble tribute of my admiration.'

'And then,'—said Isabel, with great interest written on her handsome face, for the young man stopped short.

'Then I became a reader of romance of the wildest school—The Thousand and one Phantoms, Monte Christo, Angelina. I loved, I adored the

heroines of all these. I soon exchanged them for Sybil Werner, Dolly Varden, the fallen Peri, and Haidee. These I again exchanged for Cordelia, Virginia, and Ophelia. I saw and admired statues and paintings of heathen goddesses, Juno, Venus, and the rest. I left these for Rebekah, Ruth, Martha, and Mary. But still, however much I admired any of them at first, they palled upon my imagination at last; I could only see them while reading of them, or when listening to solemn music. At last I saw you. I felt that all these had been but shadowy prefigurements of yourself. The beautiful is no longer a myth; you are my ideal!

He had risen to his feet. As the force of his emotions had made him speak louder, she approached him and took his trembling hand in hers.

‘You love your ideal, then?’ she said softly.

‘I do—I do!—fervently, fondly love. May I hope?’ he exclaimed passionately.

They stood there a few moments locked in each other’s arms. At last Isabel spoke in a voice thick with emotion.

‘I believe you love me, I’ve believed it all along. I confess that you are not indifferent to

me, but your position in life is such that were our attachment even suspected you would be forbidden the house. I am unfit to be your wife as a mechanic even if I were willing, and I have seen that you make no effort to rise. Other men, with half your genius, would have been in the ministry before this. You are a Christian. It would give you position, all.'

'No, no, Isabel: I have thought of this too, but I,—you would despise the man who could say, Put me in one of the priest's offices, so that I may marry a woman. I have been a traitor to myself, for I had vowed never to tell you how much I loved. I felt that it was folly to love the niece of the rich Mr. Clinton, though it was bliss to hear Isabel speak. Holiness and Isabel have been twin feelings with me, they are inseparable. Losing you I lose it, born together they will together die. No,—no; it cannot, must not be.'

So saying, he raised her hand respectfully to his lips, kissed it passionately, and darted out of the room.

Isabel returned to her seat; throwing herself back, she clasped her forehead with her hands, as she said aloud—

‘Courageous, true, poetical, noble, but no match for me in diplomacy. Diplomacy! Ah! what good is it to me? What good all this play on human feeling on his high soul? None—worse than none; for it has only made me certain that I possess that which I am forbidden to enjoy.’

When Miss Clinton entered the drawing-room an hour later, she found her cousin pacing up and down, seemingly engaged in a battle of conflicting feelings.

‘Another proposal in a more distinct form, I expect:’ but she only said playfully—

‘Well, Captain, practising the goose-step I see.’

‘Yes; pack-drill with heavy kit.’

‘What is it? tell me. Perhaps I can take some of the weight.’

The Captain took a seat by her side, and after a short pause, in which he seemed to conquer an unseen foe, he said—

‘I thought you introduced that young man to me by the name of Hartley?’

‘Why, you are not going to fetch him out, are you?’

‘I’ll tell you why I ask. Just now, whilst the

old gent was talking to a friend in the next grounds about the fungi and earwigs I wandered down to the hedge by the roadside. Who should I see on his nag but Jones, with a sketchbook under his arm, going to make Lake Lucerne out of Twickenham Ait. Just then this Hartley, or Mortimer, as Jones styled him, came up. When I saw him here I thought that he would make a good chaplain to a marching regiment; but when I heard him there, I put him down for another uniform directly.'

'What was that?' inquired Isabel, coldly.

'A billiard-marker—a man about town.'

Isabel's face had worn an expression of incredulity until the Captain made this declaration, and then it was instantly changed for one of surprise.

'Well, and what else, Charley?' she said, eagerly.

'He did not stop long, and Jones told me, in answer to my questions, that he had met Mortimer behind the curtain at a theatre, where a friend of his was engaged to paint the scenes; and what was more astounding to me, after what you told me, he was playing what is called the

leading business there, and was a very successful actor.'

'I can scarcely believe that I am awake. Did you hear Jones call him Mortimer? did he make any allusion to their former acquaintance?'

'Yes, plenty. Jones also told me that he had left the stage suddenly, intending, it was said, to take a higher flight in search of fame.'

'You told uncle this,' said Isabel, with forced calmness.

'Not I; I thought about it a long while before I told you. I don't half like it now it is done, but I felt it my duty to tell. I hope I ain't proud; but I don't like to see the man associating with my cousin who has been the companion of those gin-and-beery players.'

'Jones will make it known, I expect.'

'No no, he won't. I saw at a glance that you would be implicated by the exposure, and so I bound him over to silence during your will and pleasure. May I ask what you intend to do?'

'Nothing at present, Charley, except thank you for your kindness, and trust to your honour for silence. All this must have happened some time ago I am certain, from what I know myself.'

Good-bye for the present, I am going to dress for dinner.'

When alone in her apartment she asked herself the question if Hartley was not her match in diplomacy after all. Was she but one of the steps in the ladder of fame for him to climb by? Had she been only a study in human nature for him? And above all, had he not extracted a confession of love? Was it not all acting on his part? Was there not something else more tempting to him than either the ministry or herself? She piqued herself upon her knowledge of the human heart and its secret springs of action, but the more she applied the ordinary rules of cause and effect to Hartley's conduct, the more she was baffled.

CHAPTER XIII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

AMIDST that vast conglomeration of wood, clay, stone, and iron called London, there are a few green trees to be found in out-of-the-way corners, affording, as they do, a striking type of the spiritual condition of the city itself; for it seems in vain that we look upon those engaged in the great buy and sell of city life for any symptoms of a healthy religious feeling; yet, like the green trees, some few indications of a supreme love to God are to be found if sought for. We are not going to point out a city church in which some dozen individuals share the seats, gifts, and litanical responses on the sabbath day, in proof of what we allege; but to the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, situated at the time of which we write in Gresham Street, City. We introduce this noble institution, of which England

may be justly proud, to the notice of our readers, before taking a three years' retrospect, because it has been a very powerful agency in bringing about that change of thought and action so noticeable in our hero's conduct in the preceding chapter.

When Hartley left the theatre that evening, he entered a coffee-house in an adjoining street, there to break the neck of a new part, as the first reading is sometimes termed, but the attempt at study proved futile; he wandered from the book into vacuity, for he saw nothing. At last he started up, muttering, 'It's past ten o'clock; she won't stop to see it out, surely. I'll fetch a cab for her.' He hurried out and fulfilled his design, and had the satisfaction of seeing Bessie avail herself of this silent proof of his respect, although she knew it not. As he stood in front of the playhouse awaiting her appearance at the box-office door before he signalled the cabman and slipped out of sight, he overheard some rough voices behind him exchanging opinions on himself.

'That ere is the young feller, Bill, as played the count in the fust piece.'

‘The barren you means, and werry well he did it, in my opinion.’

Hartley did not stay to hear any more, but bit his lips and passed away. Ned, thought he, is right, the coaleys and costers do praise me. I must not stop here much longer, or I shall spoil myself for ever. I’ll go back to the anvil, finish my education for the high-class drama, cut Emma, and go into the provinces. The next day he gave the manager notice of his intention to leave. That individual expressed his great regret at parting, but praised his intention of going in for the upper walks, as he called it. Hartley said nothing to Emma, who could scarcely believe that she saw aright when she beheld a large poster announcing the farewell performance of her paramour. Then she thought it was a draw to fill the house, but when Hartley coolly told her that he was going to work again, and quit the stage for ever, her rage knew no bounds; her pride received a severe blow there. She had considered it no disgrace to be the mistress to the leading actor at the Blank, but to stand in the same position to a mere workman was something so repugnant to her sense of dignity and ambition, that she scouted it

at once. She threatened to leave him. Hartley smiled. She upbraided him for making her what she was. Hartley smiled. She threatened to get intoxicated and break everything. Hartley told her that she would get more money by calling the brokers in and selling them. She then altered her tactics and tried the effect of tears, but all to no purpose. Finding that she had no power over him, and believing that she had been duped, she threatened to take his life, and rushed madly from the house. No sooner had she left him than he summoned the landlady, paid a quarter's rent in advance; instead of a quarter's warning, packed up his wearing apparel, and left the house. In less than a fortnight he was at his old occupation for the same firm. One Sunday, while walking in the direction of a railway station, one of the associates of the institution already mentioned put a tract into his hand. He read it—he read everything, from a shoemaker's puff to Homer. At the foot of the last page of the paper he found an invitation to all young men desirous of attending the meetings of the society. This was precisely what he wanted; he had long been looking for a key by which he could unlock the great respectability. It

was in his hand ; he would go. It required no ordinary degree of moral courage and strength of purpose to leave the stage where he had established a footing and tasted of the sweets of applause ; such a step showed a cool calculating ambition, before which few things would prove permanent obstacles to success. His theatrical pursuits and his improper private life had done much to alter his character. He was silent and morose, haughty and more independent than ever. He occasionally evinced a tendency to drink freely, but this toting was done alone. When he first entered the room in Gresham Street his religious belief, tested by the Lord's Prayer, would have been something like this: Father, eh ! some of the children are favourites, they are not all sinners who see daylight once a week. A fellow can't help swearing. If the kingdom is to come, the sooner it comes the better, if it is anything better than this. If God is almighty his will is sure to be done. You will get your daily bread in this free and enlightened country if you work when there is work to do. I know I am passionate, but I don't owe a grudge for ever. I should like to know where the evil came from before I ask to

be forgiven for what I can't help ;—while, as for the glory, who has a better right to it than those who originated the idea of its existence ?

While this was his position with regard to revealed religion, his natural heart had lost much of its former generosity and truthfulness. He was no longer ingenuous, no longer above meanness, no longer incapable of inflicting cruelty ; and yet with all this wickedness in his heart, he had a very correct notion of the leading features of the Christian system in his head.

He had not been in the room many minutes, before it was crowded to excess ; it was carpeted, and each individual was accommodated with a chair. Near the fireplace stood a table, on which lay a Bible ; around the room were lounges ; and the whole place differed so much from an ordinary public room, that Hartley was astonished. He noticed also the friendly feeling which subsisted amongst the members ; everybody knew everybody, and all chatted freely with each other. The time came for opening the meeting— a gentleman of most benevolent appearance and affable demeanour coming from an ante-room for that purpose ; the hymn whose first words are—

'A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fitted for the sky,'

was sung; the brethren then knelt together while one of their number offered a prayer, which was remarkable for nothing but its extreme simplicity. It however worked a great change in Hartley's opinions of the religious world; for, while the leader of this holy exercise seemed deeply impressed with the august majesty and transcendant grandeur of the Deity, he never lost sight of the Fatherhood of God, and the sonship of those who were justified by faith. In conclusion, he invoked the offices of the Spirit in converting any present who, as members of the great human family, were the children of God, who, like one of old, stood afar off; he desired that they might hear the Gospel invitation that afternoon effectually, so that they might draw nigh and be reconciled to God.

This was a new view of the matter to Hartley; so much so, that he felt sorry when the young man's supplication ended, and the brethren resumed their seats.

The president of the meeting then proceeded

to open a subject for discussion, which he entitled, 'The duties of the Church to the world.' In his prefatory remarks, he briefly traced the progress of Christianity down to the present time, making several interesting allusions to his own travels in the East, as illustrative of what he said. When he had finished his introductory remarks, he declared the class duly opened. Several of the brethren then rose and spoke to the meaning of the text selected for the occasion. Many of the speakers showed an enlarged acquaintance with the deep truths of Holy Writ; whilst others made references to the original languages of the Scriptures, in a way which proved them to be men of no ordinary ability as linguists, and critical readers of the Word. Harry had become deeply interested in the discussion when the chairman closed it: a hymn was then sung—a prayer offered—and the meeting broke up. The young men then formed themselves into knots of five or six. Hartley rose to leave. When he reached the door, a gentleman stopped him, and in an affectionate manner invited him to stay to tea. Hartley was about to decline, when he happened to catch the brother's kindly expression of countenance; his

resolution thawed and melted away ; and almost before he was aware of it, he found himself being gently led to a seat in a retired corner of the room. Mr. Wilson, such was this person's name, trotted our hero into a pleasant conversation upon the general topics of the day, and their bearing on the subject recently discussed. He possessed a comprehensive knowledge of things in general, and a happy knack of imparting information without appearing to do so ; his talk was free from cant and textual phraseology ; so that Hartley soon felt quite at home with him, even while talking on subjects of which he knew but little. While there was an absence of all that makes a religious man ridiculous, there was about Mr. Wilson an odour of sanctity, and in such a degree did he possess it, that Hartley, accustomed as he was to express his thoughts in the plainest and rudest style, felt himself obliged to test his sentiments by a new standard, before he uttered them in befitting language ; for he felt that higher thoughts of religious duties to God and mankind than his own, were actually embodied in his new-made acquaintance. Taking it for granted that Hartley was a Christian man—for

the actor-smith was too clever and too proud to say anything to make him think otherwise—finding also that he was dealing with a man of intellect, Mr. Wilson allowed himself to run out on his favourite ideas; as who does not when they feel themselves appreciated, especially over a cup of tea in a public room?

‘I have a notion,’ said he, ‘that a great mistake is made by those who wish to religionise the working classes. I think that, generally speaking, there is too great a difference in the social status of the teacher and the taught. Thus, in the Church of England we find the sons of noblemen, educated at Universities, teaching clodhoppers the way of life in a hamlet; or more lately, in a crowded part of London, or any other city, thickly populated by poor persons. Well now, I think that the great secret of success in teaching, is sympathy between the teacher and the taught. The Son of God, when he took our nature, seemed to understand this: people who heard him, felt as we do when we read his recorded sayings—that he knew what was in the heart of man. When speaking to workpeople, he used common similes, such as salt, seed,

ploughs, candlesticks, fields, birds, and the like things. The people felt that they were understood by the Great Teacher. They did not, as the labourer does now, feel themselves in the presence of a fine gentleman, whose very attempts at familiarity only serve to show the disparity between their stations. "Is not this the carpenter's son? whence has he this wisdom?" said they. But then it must be remembered, that even this, carried to excess, is an evil. Ministers should avoid burlesque—should illustrate Scripture naturally, not funnily. Punning in pulpits is not in keeping with the character of the Great Teacher, who absolutely, as a Jew only, among Jews, turned the money-changers out of the temple, acting like a man who saw things only in the light of right principles. I believe that more good would be done by converting a hundred really intellectual working men, and getting them to live out and preach their religion among workpeople, than is accomplished by the present machinery of special services and lectures. If a number of factory Melancthons and Luthers could be found, who would stop in the factories, and not strive to become clergymen, the work would, under God's

· blessing, in my opinion, soon be much forwarded.'

'But I thought [that the City missionaries belonged to the lower classes themselves?'

'Yes; and very useful they are, too; but take any dozen of them indiscriminately, and see if you would like to give any of them three shillings per day for the manual labour they seem capable of doing. In fact, I feel very much inclined to adopt an opinion I very often hear expressed by those whom I visit in my district; and that is, that they do it because they are paid for it, and are fit for nothing else. What we want is men of the Livingstone stamp. I must confess that I fail to find the models for the half-starved, seedy-coated, white-chokered men, who go from house to house, among the apostles. Paul the tent-maker and voyager, Peter the fisherman, and the rest, never had such smooth white hands as they have. I am a tradesman myself—that is, I buy things at one price and sell them at another. It may be, undoubtedly is wrong, but I must confess that I often wish I were a mechanic, so that I might enter into the genius and habits of thought of the masses; a mechanic, if possible, single, whose con-

stant and unremitting attention to business secures him constant employment; earning sufficient wages to provide him with the necessaries of life, with a residue for literature and old age; setting aside a tenth of his income to God's service; spending the Sabbath in preaching in ragged churches and in teaching in ragged schools; cultivating his intellect to the highest pitch of which it is capable, or circumstances permitted; getting up in church history and theology, to counteract the teachings and expose the errors of the Church of Rome, thus becoming a bulwark against the insidious workings of the bread-basket of the Sisters of Mercy, who reach a sick man's soul through his stomach; searching into the mysteries of nature, so as to meet the Pantheist on his own ground,—studying metaphysics, to meet the Atheist there also; if possible, learning to read the Scriptures in the original tongues. I know it may be said that the working classes do not require all this; but I say, taking humanity right through, there are none to be found who require so much from their teachers as they do. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton has shown us how the trading element first developed itself in Eng-

land : would that such a pen would undertake to show the bearings of the rising intelligence of the workman in the present era, with reference to the religion, the literature, and politics of our land, as well as to show what might be done for the good of the world, by the tremendous monetary interests which they represent in the aggregate.'

It was now time to prepare for evening Service at the various places of worship to which the young men were accustomed to go ; for one of the finest features of this Association is, that it is quite unsectarian. In this particular, we hope that it is typical of a better state of things universally : at present there are, indeed, diversities of operation, if the same spirit in the world.

'Where do you attend?' inquired Mr. Wilson of Hartley.

'I'll go with you anywhere, sir,' said Hartley, plainly.

'Then you must walk quickly ; for my place is a long way from here.'

They went together to a chapel on the outskirts of London. The service was simple but earnest in its tone : the sermon, which Hartley heard with the utmost attention, contained the

following sentences among others :—‘ God is Love ; —do you ask for additional proof of this, more than nature affords? proofs in themselves strong enough to convince any but a fallen creature? Humanity has discarded nature. We hear a great deal of talk about looking from nature up to nature’s God ; if men did this ever, it would be at least reversing the proper order of things ; we should look from nature’s God to nature. Depend upon it, he that knows the Maker best, will understand the works most. Man needed revelation ; it came—it is here. Take Christ out of the Bible, what have you left?—a house without a tenant ; a body without a soul. Who was Christ? A little babe, a pious youth, an industrious mechanic, a lofty pure-minded teacher, a peaceful citizen, a man of deep earnest prayer and practical benevolence. Behold him in the manger, hear him from the ship, listen to him on the mount, behold him paying tribute, behold him in Gethsemane, follow him to Calvary. Is there anything, in all these developments of Deity, which does not prove that the only element in the Divine character is love? View God as the Creator only, and he becomes awful ; view him as

the dictator of the moral law—a law indispensable to the happiness of mankind—and he becomes terrible: but behold him as the babe—the man of sorrows—the offering once for all,—and he is Love!

The preacher continued in this strain for half an hour; but in that half-hour he had given Hartley a new system of religious ideas.

When they reached the chapel gates they found an open carriage drawn up: in it sat a lady of great personal beauty. As Mr. Hartley and his friend were passing, the lady touched Mr. Wilson on the shoulder with her parasol. Harry stepped back a little when he noticed this, and occupied himself, after his usual manner, in looking as disinterestedly as possible at everything. Miss Clinton had seen a stranger sitting with Mr. Wilson, and was struck with the marked attention which he bestowed on a sermon which fell upon her ears like a thrice-told tale. Wishing to get a closer look at him, she had stopped Mr. Wilson, with whom she was on terms of intimacy. Finding that the lady regarded him with considerable interest, Hartley threw yet more of the glazed look into his eyes,

and was seemingly lost in metaphysical speculations. Notwithstanding this bye-play, he could not help feeling that the lady had penetrated the film, and had seen through his assumed indifference. It was so new a sensation to feel himself read through, that he became quite nervous, dropped his eyes, and looked on the pavement. For the first time in his life he felt himself gauged and measured by an intellect superior to his own—an intellect, too, enshrined in so much material beauty, and surrounded by all the outward evidences and appliances of wealth.

After a short consultation with Miss Clinton, Mr. Wilson rejoined Hartley, to whom he apologised for detaining him so long, stating in extenuation that the lady had honoured him by asking his opinion of the practical working of a scheme she had propounded for the discipline of a ragged school with which she was connected.

Hartley expressed a wish in the faintest possible manner to see the school in which Mr. Wilson took so much interest. But he did not tell him what new feelings had taken possession of

his heart or what new ideas had entered his head concerning religion and womankind. He was destined to experience another new sensation. He had a secret to keep for the first time—one of the heart.

He parted with his friend with a promise to see him again on the first opportunity. He then wandered slowly home, pondering on the events of the last few hours—allowing his soul to indulge freely in the rich feast of lofty and sublime ideas of truth presented to it, as well as in those designs of practical benevolence and Christian philanthropy to which he had listened with astonishment; but more than all did his imagination or his genius—for love is genius, and love is inventive—seek to build a castle in which that embodiment of the beautiful, that master spirit before which his stern will quailed, should live for aye. ‘Each man,’ says David Thomas, ‘makes his own universe in thought.’ Thought made Milton’s Heaven and Dante’s Hell. And thought is the lover’s paradise, a paradise which begins to fade the moment the last tones of the marriage bell touch his disenchanted ear. But Hartley was not destined to go so far as the

Hymenial altar before that dread stern reality called the Past in the shape of Sam Waters touched him on the shoulder and dispelled for the nonce the bright vision that his fancy had conjured up.

Sam—who was now the husband of the younger of the sisters Adams—put him in possession of some information which rankled in his bosom to the utter extermination of every pure and noble thought which had been implanted there that afternoon and evening.

‘You see,’ said the worthy fellow, ‘that there Emma as bin round to our domicile and wanted my missus to give her some tin to buy gin with. Of course she didn’t give her none, so she smashed our windows. What are we to do with her? Ah! I forgot, she swears she will give you one for your nob.’

‘Listen,’ replied Hartley, and he hissed the words through his teeth: ‘For this once, Sam, I will pay you for the damage she has done, but if she does any more you must lock her up or take the consequences for yourself: and mind you tell her this—if she molests me, strikes me, gives me but the least legal pull, I will either kill her in

self-defence, or let her mark me and then give her the law. She will believe you if you tell her I say it—she knows me well enough. Good night, Sam.' Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, thought he, as he entered the house.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOPE.

‘WELL, wonders will never cease! what do you think, Bessie?’ exclaimed Miss Paris, as she came running in to Miss Cleveland’s chamber, panting for breath.

‘I am sure I don’t know,’ said that young lady, demurely throwing her ringlets back over her shoulders; and looking up to her friend’s face, she asked what was the matter.

‘Why, I’ll tell you, you little nun. I’ve heard news of somebody.’

‘You have heard of Harry,’ said the unsophisticated girl, dropping her work and taking her friend’s hand in hers. ‘Do tell me what you have heard, there’s a dear teacher.’

‘Oh, of course I will! I am not going to tease my little maid with the ringlets, as I used to call you a long, long time ago, when your only sweet-

heart was almond hardbake, and how you used to cry when I took it away and substituted the Shepherd's story : but there, I see I must get a cat and a brass collar, for I am a garrulous old maid I find every day. Well, then, I have for a long time known that he has been at work at his trade again.'

'And you never told me,' said the young girl, reproachfully.

'Well, all in good time ; your dear teacher is losing all her dearness, isn't she ? Well, you see, this is why I didn't tell you before : although he went back to work, and his leisure time was given almost exclusively to study, I found out that he sometimes did things which would never do for the husband of my pet. So, I waited and prayed for him, when one day Mrs. Waters rejoiced my old heart with the news that Harry had turned quite religious ; I had a great mind to run and tell you, but then I thought about the seed that fell upon a rock, and I remembered how excitable he was, and his change might be like the sea : when it rises it wets a yard or two of sand on the shore, then runs right away as if it were ashamed of itself ; and this is just what I've often seen among

people when they first hear about Christ properly, they do a great deal of good and then run back to look at it; this they often do, though they never run quite so far back at any time after the first. You must excuse me, but I can't help talking class now and then. Well, then, last night I went to look after an absentee from the school, when, who should I meet coming out of the house just as I was going in but Hartley himself, in the character of district visitor. He did not see me, but I recognised him although his face was pale, haggard, and wan; he looks more love sick than you did, Bessie, and that is saying a great deal. Well, I passed him, and on entering the house I took the liberty of asking Mrs. Knighton who he was. She burst out in a torrent of eulogium: he was Mr. Hartley; he had saved her life some years ago,—he had picked her up outside a workhouse; she had prospered solely on a gift he had afterwards obtained for her; he had since reclaimed her husband, through whose drunken habits she had become so reduced; in fact, she would lay down her life to serve him. I asked her if he seemed happy. At first she said yes, and then admitted that he was very melancholy sometimes.

I thought I knew why ; of course I thought of you, and that's why I am here to tell you that Emma Adams is very ill, and Mrs. Knighton finding that I knew her asked me how she should get her conveyed to her own house, for it seems that for some reason she takes a deep interest in her. When she is removed we will go and see her, and then, perhaps, we may do something to remove the poor fellow's melancholy.'

Bessie, with some hesitation, and a great many blushes, consented to do as Miss Paris proposed.

Miss Paris knew nothing of Emma's former life beyond that she had been a stage dancer at the theatre at which Hartley had been a performer. She only saw in her a suffering fellow-creature ; had she known the real cause of that suffering, it is probable that she would not have invited Bessie to accompany her to the dying girl's bedside.

It will be obvious to all that Miss Paris was mistaken as to the real cause of Hartley's melancholy. His depression of spirits had its origin in many causes, and Bessie was only one of them ; true he loved, but did he love a woman only—ambition would, in nine cases out of ten of this

description, be the better word. Isabel Clinton was not so much the object of his heart's adoration as she was the central idea in the sublimified life of his imagination. Much of the misery which he suffered arose from the fact that he had a religiousness without holiness, a catechism well learned, without grace to make its teaching a life to be lived, not simply a number of facts to be understood. His intellect had responded to the truths of the gospel—had gone out, met, and grasped it with a cordial welcome; but his soul remained untouched by its spirit. He understood somewhat of the genius of the Book, though its Divine Author remained an objective truth, not an indwelling life to him. Association with the good in the Church, had done much in removing the incrustation of uncharitableness which had grown over his heart during his theatrical experience. His innate love of the beautiful in thought had been fostered by the preaching of some of the finest intellects of the age. While no longer flagrantly immoral, he only adopted so much of Christianity as would enable him, together with his fine talents, to obtain and keep a position in the religious and intellectual world.

His growing love for the beautiful had been his chief inducement, he thought, for seeking the society of Isabel ; he questioned if his attachment was sincere. One thing was certain, that a wish to occupy the first place in her esteem actuated him in all he did, and coloured all he said. Did he work hard at the anvil, it was that he might be independent if poor. Blinded to his own motives, he attributed this industry to a wish to be diligent in business merely. Did he preach to the poor, or lecture to workmen, he knew that she would approve, while he firmly believed that his efforts had for their main object the amelioration of the condition of those to whom he preached and lectured. Did a new thought spring up in his mind, or a new view of truth present itself to him, it was mentally dedicated to her to be worked up into some conversation in which she would take part ; or written in some sermon, essay, prayer, or poem which she would either hear or read. Thus did this naturally acute man deceive himself. It is hard to think of such a man as a hypocrite, nor was he one to himself. Thus he prayed, but his prayer was for wisdom, for clear views of truth—not for conversion and growth in

grace. He had mistaken the reception of ideas of truth for truth itself in his soul. He had acted up to his false lights, for the brain is ever the slave of the heart. Had he only to apply his attention to the present state of things, it is probable that he would have been as happy as other restless ambitious men ; but then the past, like a black cloud of memory, would steal over the bright sky of future hope, and make him wretched and miserable indeed. He had much to reflect upon, but much more to fear. An innocent girl deceived, an ignorant girl ruined ; an innocent girl suffering quietly, an ignorant girl swearing vengeance. If a false philosophy had justified him in deserting Bessie, it in no wise, strain it how he would, justified him in victimising Emma ; and even if it did do so to his satisfaction, it by no means served as a protection from any course of conduct that she might choose to pursue ; for Hartley well knew what justice demanded of him in relation to her on moral principles only, to say nothing of the opinion of the Church, and by the Church he meant Isabel—for she was Church and everything to him. Should Emma in a fit of drunkenness expose him to the

Church, not as the actor merely, but as the seducer, his chance for Isabel would be for ever gone. Thus did the fear of discovery nullify and darken his brightest hopes—thus did he try to wade through a chaos of conflicting feelings. Too deeply in love with Isabel to make any right effort to escape—too much afraid of the immediate results of a right course of action—he never gave his heart to God.

CHAPTER XV.

TRUE LOVE AND LOGIC.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY, and St. Paul's Cathedral, have each their share of the busts and full-sized figures of the great men who, while living, adorned their country, and who at the time of their death held political opinions not unfavourable to the then existing government, and whose religious creed did not deny the necessity for a church whose revenues were derived from its connection with the state. But thanks to art and science, the hand-maidens of religion, the British workman can find at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham a larger collection of the heads of the great than the liveried James's and John's will allow to enter the large town establishments of their mistress, without reference to creed, politics, or country. Voltaire and Luther, Garrick and Knox, Byron and Whitfield, are to be found in this numerous

and heterogeneous collection, thus affording the English operative an opportunity of beholding in ten minutes the material mementoes of men whose thoughts have made the world what we find it. How narrow is the view, how conventional the thought, that we should exclude the wicked and the unjust from our category of the benefactors of mankind! The devil gave us Christ, good is always more powerful than evil. Herod took John's life, and so perpetuated his name for the execration of mankind. Modern Herods have lived to give us Cromwell and Bunyan, and Fox's Book of Martyrs. The more distinguished the antagonist of truth, the better for truth in the end; and no greater blessing could have fallen upon England than the appointment of the learned Mr. Wiseman to the imaginary archbishopric of Westminster in the nineteenth century. Thus, taking advantage (as Rome does) of the spirit of religious liberty, which rose phoenix-like from the fires of Smithfield, we are thankful for such a purgative for the Established Church, and for such an incentive and tonic for the dissenting churches of our Protestant land. Oh, ye English workmen! men will point you to the ruins of

Nineveh, to the Pyramids of Egypt, to the temples of ancient Greece and Rome, as the landmarks of human progress. But remember, that if they are proofs of the existence of the intellect and power of the few, they are also slave-built, and evidence of the degradation of the many. As you walk through the courts of the Crystal Palace think of this, as you stand in the middle of that epitome of the world's history, written for you, if we may use the term, with the hammers, trowels, and brushes of the free men of your sort. Purchase a fourpenny gilt-edged testament, call it your own, stand in the central transept of this noble building, read in that little book how Jesus was born in a manger, think of the persecution of the innocents, the insults which our blessed Master endured, and his cruel death. Then contrast your condition with the heathen nations around you—nay, even with the nations of Europe—and we tell you, that if, when you do this, you do not feel swelling up in your hearts a feeling of love for that holy man of sorrow, who assumed our condition and gave up his life so that we might have that book, and these national, political, and religious privileges resultant there-

from;—we say, if you do not feel when you thus have this grandest development of human freedom before you; and if when you trace it to its cause you do not become overwhelmed with gratitude to a merciful God for his gift of Christ,—we say that you want some of the essential elements in the character of a true man, or an enlightened being. Be not content to be the pawns on the chess-board of life, with which the middle and upper classes play their different and peculiar games of philanthropy, commerce, and politics. Be at least self-moving, important figures in the game. You can be kings in thought, bishops in piety, knights in valour, and castles in moral strength. Be no longer the pawns moved about and often lost to cover the deep design or want of knowledge of the player; but act, think, and play the game of life for yourselves, with truth in your souls, and the love of God for your motive.

Hartley had written this panegyric on the real causes of human progress, as he sat beneath the shade of an orange-tree in the Paxtonian home of art. With a deep sigh he folded the manuscript and put it in his pocket-book, then drawing a

copy of the 'Homilist' from his pocket, he made an abortive effort to read one of the articles which the number contained. Like many men in similar circumstances, he could write when he could not read; reading wants the excitement of writing to the troubled soul of a man with Hartley's ardent temperament. None are so happy as the imaginative when the heart is right, none so miserable when it is wrong. He was about to rise and walk away, when he heard a rustling of the leaves of the tree behind him, and felt a hand laid very gently on his shoulder: in another moment Isabel Clinton stood before him.

'Ah! how do you do, Mr. Hartley? I mean Mr. Mortimer!' exclaimed the lady in a lively dashing way. Then without waiting for a reply, she took a seat before Hartley was sufficiently recovered from his surprise to rise and offer her one.

Hartley's face, which before her arrival was pale and haggard, became quite livid, his lips quivered, and his sunken eye flashed with unwonted light.

Isabel regarded him intently for a moment, as he said in a tone of voice which sounded quite

unnatural for him, for a bitter sarcasm ran through the words, 'Your rich brave cousin has played the old woman, Miss Clinton.'

Isabel seeing in the expression of his face all the outward signs of a broken spirit, only answered firmly, 'I think that you are a little unfair, Mr. Hartley; my cousin is none the less a true man because he loves me, and therefore told me about you. Had he been an old woman, he would have told my uncle, not me.' And then she added in a faltering voice, 'Besides, you know sir, he knew nothing of—of—our last interview.'

Hartley's face became, if possible, whiter than before, as he exclaimed, in an agonising tone, 'You know all concerning me as Mortimer.'

Isabel, thinking she understood him, replied, 'All, yes all,' and then she added in gayer tone, 'Why there is not so much in all, when all comes to all, to cause so much consternation in an iron man like you, is there?' Then after a little pause, she said, 'I thought that you knew me better than to suppose that I shared in the prejudices of class.'

'I ask your pardon, lady,' said Hartley, re-

covering a little and smiling faintly; 'I never thought for a moment that you would allow a popular prejudice to overcome your strong sense of the right of individual judgment. That you are here, and that you deign to speak to me now, is in itself a convincing proof to the contrary. Be pleased to remember, also, that the iron in my character has been subjected to the fires of love, and easily bends with the lightest blow of the hammer of adverse circumstance.'

'Come now, that's better, at least it is none the worse for coming from the smithy, as you call it; and now, if you will be more cheerful I don't mind confessing that—' here she paused.

'What will you confess?' inquired Hartley, looking quite pleased, for he felt confident that the lady knew nothing about Emma.

'Well, that I found out that you were coming here to-day, and that I followed you. I don't mind telling you this, because I think that you have sense enough to see that in our present awkward position, my actions must not be judged by the regular standard.' She blushed, stammered, and hesitated as she said this, but grew calmer as her subject became one of the head, and

less of the heart. 'And then about this acting business; it seems to me that acting, like painting, is an art, the stage being the frame of the pictures produced by the dramatist. I place Kemble with Mozart and Angelo, they each represent a phase of art. I do not visit theatres myself, because I know a more direct way of doing good, and because I am commanded to avoid the very appearance of evil; but I think none the less of you for having been Mr. Mortimer. I came here to-day because I thought that you feared that the information which my cousin gave me concerning you, had altered your position in my esteem. It has not; I respect you as much as before.'

Just then an almost derisive smile played upon Hartley's features; for he felt himself in the position of a man who was expected to be grateful for a favour which he did not value. He had never had a doubt about the artistic use of the stage, nor did he care who knew about his theatrical freak, if they did not know about Emma. When Isabel ceased speaking, he remained silent, he felt as if he had nothing truthful to say after the lady had made such a con-

cession to common sense. He also felt that while giving utterance to this enlightened view, she had placed him in the position of a lover against his inclination. In saying this she had undone all that he hoped he had done in his last interview with her in the museum, before his lucky or unlucky meeting with Jones and Leclerque. To follow up a conversation opened in this strain, would be to seem desirous of forming a plan of future action, which to him seemed likely to bring about disastrous results. He therefore framed the following reply, in which, while he quite acquiesced in the lady's opinion concerning his favourite art, he took her away from her point by placing another obstacle in the way.

‘I think, Miss Clinton, that you have expressed an opinion in which most of the noble spirits, whose names are written beneath these plaster casts, did they hear you, would coincide; and that brings another thought to my mind, which is, that the majority of great men when young, like me were poor and proud.’

Isabel's reply to this evasion, was a look of sadness deepened by affectionate interest in the fortunes of the man, who at every turn became

more mysterious to her. She felt convinced by these words of his, that he knew her real mission there that day ; plausible though her excuse had been, and impregnable though her position really was, unless she said anything else to place herself in his power. Thinking to avoid this, and yet come to something decisive, she said, after a long pause, 'I've often thought it strange that the world, which has been so long habitable, should have produced so few out of its millions—nay, more than millions—of inhabitants, who are deemed worthy of a monument. True,' she added, smiling a little, 'I had forgotten those worthies who monopolise all the stained glass in public buildings ; but even they were more famous for their virtues than their wits. I think that intellect gets more honoured than virtue—after all.'

'All of which honour is posthumous, and no real benefit to the man himself,' said Hartley, still veering from the point, although it taxed his powers to the utmost to argue against the brilliant dazzling woman, whose very beauty and condescension nearly overcame him. 'For,' continued he, 'the thought that makes the fortune of a man, and gives his name to be heralded by

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the trumpet of fame, often does not pass through his brain till late in life. I think that the Creator has a great book of intellect sealed to human eyes; but which he opens gradually as men become capable of understanding a set of ideas, each set being preparatory to the revelation of others more difficult, though equally simple when looked at through those antecedently delivered to mankind. This is what I mean: it would have been useless to have allowed the idea of steam power to enter the head of an Indian chief in the fifteenth century; for even when it came forth in the eighteenth century, he who had the honour to propound it to a civilised people was laughed at by the very men whose children now avail themselves of the facilities which the invention affords in its various applications.'

'Then,' said Isabel, becoming interested, 'you do not believe in the independence of mind?'

'Not as mind unconnected with the soul, certainly not. Taken as the servant of the soul, in relation to its duties towards God, it is certainly independent with the soul of God; but as mind acting on matter, in the same way in which the Divine mind acted on it in the Creation, it is

dependent, and becomes the channel of the Divine volition. No, no! all light comes from the Father of Light, however we may act towards it. If there is not a Divine design, why this slow development—why have we been six thousand years finding out the proper purposes to which electricity should be applied?’

Hartley became quite excited as he argued thus: he forgot for the time that Isabel was the niece of the rich Mr. Clinton; she also forgot that he who spoke so earnestly was but a poor workman; they only saw intellect and soul in each other, there was a perfect union of both.

‘How distinguished must that man feel, if your theory is a true one, whom God thus selects to be the conveyancer of light to his fellows, do you not think so?’ asked Isabel, puzzled to know where all this talk was leading.

‘Ah, but they do not all take it in that light; the poet’s pen, which makes his thoughts visible to others, is not of necessity aware of the nature of the being who employs it, or why he does so; it will always depend upon the spiritual condition of the man whom God selects. A great intellect and a holy soul are not always found in one man;

in other words, I think that a man may influence humanity mentally, without knowing God at all as a moral being, and without recognising the Divine mind in the matter, and,' continued he, still wishing to make his real meaning obvious without being compelled to express it in precise terms, 'we know nothing, comparatively, of the heart history of great men; their biographers generally write half a dozen lines, which tell you that on a certain date the subject of this biography married, and then give their opinions as to the happiness or unhappiness of the pair in the same number of words; saying nothing of previous disappointments (for few men marry those they love), and nothing shapes the character of a man so much as adversity in any form, but especially in this particular; for if men of ordinary intellect feel it, how much more must they whose cultivated minds and poetic temperaments lead them to idealise the object of their affections; or when a life becomes one long woman worship, as it not unfrequently does; and how is this misery intensified when the affection is reciprocated, but the union prevented—the union of two pure noble souls—by the intervention of some conventional

barrier of propriety, say the sordid considerations of wealth and position, although I admit that, did the swain possess the wealth, the difficulty would not long remain, then—'

'Then,' interrupted Isabel, seeing the argumentative handle which this last sentence offered her, 'then, you would say, matters might be easily arranged. Now here is a case in point: say two young people love each other,—say the lady is rich in her own right,—say the swain is proud, clever, and independent,—say that his upward progress is hindered by his pride, and thus the consummation of the happiness of the one is prevented by the pride and obstinacy of the other. If your attachment is sincere, and you have not been studying human nature with the heart of one who has already acknowledged, foolishly perhaps, that she loves you, why then this is our case.'

As she spoke these last words she became violently agitated, her bosom heaved with deep emotion, a nervous twitching of her hands at the fringe of her parasol. All told Hartley that he was loved more than any words could do.

In the silence, which lasted several minutes

after this avowal of affection, Hartley wrestled with his own wishes and his fears. Should he confess all, and thus give the real cause for his present conduct, or should he further falsify his own character by allowing Isabel to think that a proud spirit, and not the fear of right doing, actuated him? Feeling as if he were writing the death warrant of all his hopes, he said, taking her trembling hand in his—

‘ Listen to me, Isabel dearest. I love you fondly, perhaps madly. I love *you*, not myself; this may sound strangely in contrast with what I am about to say. In saying that I am independent, you say well. Independent feeling is the soul of my existence, I scorn to be dependent. Were you calmer than you now are, you would not wish me to lose my individuality in your love, for like mercy where no justice is, it would lose its worth. Nor can I hope to preserve my own character, or the chief element therein, in its integrity, and win a position, either as a writer or preacher, which I could ask you to grace and adorn. Few have done this in early life: I know of none who, starting from whence and when I did, ever accomplished anything so lofty. I care

nothing for wealth myself, nor shall I ever seek it. Be sure of one thing, dearest, that whatever you may hear of me in the future, that I love you, and you only, and my reason for avoiding you lately has been, and will ever be, that I love you too well for my own happiness. One word more and I have done for ever. It would be only romantic for us to vow eternal constancy and remain apart whilst I, an untried man, attempted to build that castle in gold, the plans of which I have so often elaborated in the air. Constancy to a vow, Isabel, I have observed, under different circumstances than those under which it is made, is often at least a great incubus on those who pledge themselves to a given course of action, and is frequently the preventive to the execution of a new purpose which a changed position in life renders expedient. No, no, Isabel, we must part, I fear, for ever now.'

As he said this his head fell upon his breast, for the strife which raged within him was more than he could bear; but he had said enough for his purpose, and again his head had proved itself stronger than his heart.

Isabel's modesty and real love took away her power to answer this specious fabrication. Again

she suspected that he was only outdoing her in diplomacy, that he loved her not. Such arguments sounded strangely coming from a man who professed to love her so devotedly.

And thus they parted.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TWO LETTERS.

‘OH for another world to conquer!’ exclaimed Hartley, as he paced his chamber with rapid strides, and then went on soliloquising. ‘Ah! Alexander, I think I know the feelings which prompted you when you gave utterance to that ambitious wish. I, too, have won and lost my world, at least I want another. This was once peopled with fairy forms, each lip was mine to kiss, each hand held to me the cup for which the ambitious crave; I drank deeply, but it was poisoned, and I awake from the sleep to which it lulled me to find that I had made the very forms whose beauty has been my ruin. Ambition will destroy its self-created world sometimes, the breath which made the bubble can destroy it. Seek a new world, say another shore; imitate a lisping girl at an evening party—bah! this is the

height of rabid sentimentalism! She said I had an iron will—would that I had! and yet I cannot stay here. She does not know how, like wax, I've been moulded and impressed by her, until I am become nothing but a leaden reflex of her golden splendour, wanting the polish which we workmen acquire so slowly: and then to think that my own folly should be the only—'

At that moment he heard a slight tap at the door of his apartment. A little girl placed two letters in his hand, and instantly disappeared. He drew near to the lamp which stood upon the table and opened them. Their contents were as follows:—

' School-house.

' DEAR SIR,

' I write to inform you that Emma Adams, an old scholar of mine and an acquaintance of yours, is now lying sick and nigh unto death at the house of your friend Knighton, whither she has been removed at that person's request. Finding her in a dangerous condition, I asked her if she would like to see a clergyman; she replied, "No, none but Harry—none but Mr. Hartley—send for him, and I shall die in peace." Thinking it my

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Hartley; but recovering himself by a strong effort, he exclaimed, pitifully, 'Emma dying—perhaps dead. Isabel gone and dead to me now—for she may be married ere this: but no matter. I will, at least, see Emma and ask her not to curse me ere she dies. It would be so like the old melodrama to pray now, or I would.'

So saying, he left the room, and was soon on his way to the abode of sickness and death.

CHAPTER XVII.

DEATH.

EMMA ADAMS lay watching the quick fingers of Bessie Cleveland, as she sat at needlework by her bedside—Bessie ever and anon casting a look of kindly inquiry at the poor sick girl.

‘Do you think he will come?’ asked the poor girl, in a faint anxious voice.

Miss Cleveland seemed to hesitate before she answered: ‘It will be out of keeping with his character for some months past if he does not come; they say he is very good to—’

‘To poor wicked creatures like me,’ said Emma, finishing the sentence for her; then she added, ‘I can’t make out how it is that this good woman takes so much notice of me, I only knew her when her husband worked at the theatre: he was a carpenter there I think. I can’t help thinking that Harry has some hand in it somehow.’

‘ Well, perhaps he has. I don’t know, like you ; I only know that you are here, Emma dear.’

‘ He must be a good Christian, I think,’ said Emma.

‘ Few doubt it,’ replied Bessie, ‘ but you must not talk so much, or you will never get well.’

‘ I shall never be well again, dear.’

Mrs. Knighton now entered, ushering Hartley into the room. Bessie was overcome with confusion ; she had expected some notice of his coming. The good woman, knowing little or nothing of her, had overlooked this ; she having only just left the room herself a few minutes before. Hartley bit his lip with vexation. Bowing coldly to Bessie, he went to the bedside. Taking Emma’s cold clammy hand in his, he said, biting his words, so as to give them the right significance to the other persons present, ‘ You wish to see me alone, do you not, Emma ?’

Emma looked assent.

When Hartley turned to look they were gone. How difficult did he find it to turn his head, and look upon the poor emaciated wreck before him, and when he did so his heart was too full to speak. After some moments of painful suspense,

the poor creature was seized with a violent fit of coughing; he instantly raised her head and assisted her to some drink, which he found in a glass on a table near at hand. When her cough had subsided he gently laid her down, letting her head rest upon his arm.

‘Are you better now, Emma?’ he asked, as the great tears streamed down his pale cheeks.

‘Yes, Harry, I am almost happy now you are here; I did so want to see you before I died, to tell you—’

‘I know—I know,’ groaned Hartley, ‘that I’ve brought you to this. Well, well, spare me, Emma, if you can.’

‘No, Harry dear, not that—I did wrong as well as you—it was my fault, Harry; oh, don’t cry so. I sent for you to tell you that I never loved any body but you. Although I’ve been so wicked, and you so good, they tell me, since we quarrelled, you won’t be cross with your little gipsey, will you? I didn’t send for you till I knew, from what I had seen of the other girls in the hospitals, that I could never get well again, and I wanted to tell you that my—your—little boy is dead. You never saw him, Harry. If he had lived perhaps I should not

die now. I ought to know you are good, Harry, 'cause afore you went acting you helped us when father died, and said you were sure he had gone to Heaven. O, Harry!' she exclaimed, as if some horrible thought had suddenly come over her, 'do you think that I shall go to hell? They always said that you were a long head at the shop; I will believe what you say. Is this Jesus a real person? you believe He is, don't you?'

'Yes, yes,' groaned Hartley, 'He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto him; He will not refuse anybody.'

'But will He forgive the likes of me? Will God let him forgive the poor girls of London, the same as He did the poor woman somewhere abroad as my old teacher read the other day? I mean girls like me—like your Emma:' she tried to draw nearer to him, as she said this in an earnest whisper, for she had already overtaxed her strength.

Hartley felt the anomalous nature of his position acutely. He knew that whatever might have become of Emma, had he not led her into deep sin? That he had done so, Conscience accused him of very materially assisting, if not actually causing her ruin. Then he stood there the pro-

fessed believer in a religious system, with the facts of which he had an enlarged acquaintance, but to whose spirit he was an entire stranger. He knew this, felt this, and his misery was intense.

The poor girl observing his perturbation, and attributing it to his conviction of the hopelessness of her case, looked awful in her terror; she made an effort to rise, only to fall again—her failing strength of body only serving to confirm her belief in her lost state, as she almost hissed out, ‘I am lost then. Bessie has deceived me. I cheated her once, it is her turn now.’

‘Not so,—not so, Emma. I firmly believe in Jesus, and I know that He will save you, if you ask him; He indeed died to save those who have sinned, as we have sinned together, if we only ask him.’

‘Ask him,—ask him for me! Bessie said God would do anything Jesus asked him; so she did—so she did. I am afraid to think of God, he is not Jesus.’

‘Listen Emma,’ said the much tried man; ‘Christ died that you might call that God whom you fear so much your loving Father, for such He really is, or He never would have sent Jesus at all; and then, dear Emma, you must not think

that God will listen to me for you, you must ask him yourself—for yourself. I am very wicked like you, you know, and need forgiveness as much. Will you pray with me in your own heart, whilst I pray for you aloud? God is all Love, Emma; try to believe this, while you pray.'

These words, uttered as they were in the most earnest tones, had a soothing effect upon the poor girl's mind; her look was placid and calm, as she gently murmured, 'I believe all that: I will pray.'

And then Harry knelt by that lowly bedside, and prayed long and earnestly for Emma.

When he looked up and saw the quiet look of peace which was over her pale wan face, he thought that she was dead. He felt relieved when the poor repentant girl whispered with her last breath, 'I feel so happy now, not like I used to feel when they threw flowers on the stage—better, better than that—better than when my baby was born.'

'And Jesus!'

'Yes, Jesus—I felt as if He were here when you prayed. God bless you, Harry!' Her spirit had fled; our happy hope the angels had borne it to her Saviour.

Hartley rose from his knees, and placed his hand upon her bosom ; not the slightest pulsation was perceptible. He felt a dimness coming over him as he slowly realized the idea of death, and saw his victim's half-closed glaring eyes fixed on him. He staggered towards the door, swooned, and fell heavily on the floor,—the iron had broken. His heart was touched ; from that moment he began to feel as well as think. Had Emma died in a hospital in the night it is probable that her body would have lain there until the morning, then been tossed into a wooden shell or a basket, and taken to the dead house, where it would have remained a stated time, and if not claimed by her friends for burial it would have been taken to the theatre for dissection by the delighted and eager students, glad to get a subject. The dead house of a hospital ! Ah ! fitting place for the enactment of the last scene of 'La Traviata.' For the one poor lady of the 'Camelias,' who begins her life of sin and shame in the Haymarket and ends it in a house of ill-fame in that part of the town, there are a hundred who go from thence to the city, and from thence to lower localities as their beauty wanes, to perish at last in the hospitals.

But have not all these poor girls the same claims on our sympathy? Yes! then why misrepresent the case? Why not have the scene—it would not require a Beverley to paint it. Say it is done, the real scene is before us! O ye ladies, will you permit bouquets to be thrown now? Those flowers if thrown will speak a language not their own, for they tell a most unpoetical truth; they lose their poetry when they are made to show how delighted are the mothers and daughters of England when well sung music covers and lends a charm to a life of debauchery, while at the same time hundreds of their sex are perishing around them, while some are lying like carrion in the dark loathsome—Bah! ‘Your carriage, my lady?’ ‘Yes, immediately.’ ‘Your brougham, right honourable sir?’ ‘No, no, I must really go behind, and compliment them. Besides, there’s the divertissement.’ ‘Ah, we see.’

The noise of Hartley’s fall brought Mrs. Knighton and Bessie from an adjoining room, in which they had awaited any signal which might be made for their appearance in the sick chamber. They both examined Hartley, and finding that he had only fainted, Mrs. Knighton immediately

turned her attention to Emma. Seeing that she was dead, she suppressed a sigh, made no exclamation whatever, and was soon engaged with Bessie in applying such simple restoratives as were at hand to Hartley.

Bessie sat on a low stool with his head in her lap.

When Hartley opened his eyes he stared about him wildly, he shuddered as his eye rested for a moment on the bed on which the poor girl lay. When he was sufficiently recovered to be able to speak, he said, almost exultingly—

‘She is gone at last!’ Then, remembering where he was, and who were present, he added, mournfully—

‘I mean, Bessie, that the Lord has been pleased to take her.’

Bessie did not know what to say in reply; indeed, she felt afraid to speak at all, but she said something about Emma being a great sufferer, and expressed her surprise at hearing she was dead.

Hartley looked incredulous, but Mrs. Knighton explained that although aware of the fact, she had remained silent for fear of distracting Miss Cleveland’s attention from him. This led to an expres-

sion of thanks from Hartley, who then left the room, followed by Mrs. Knighton, who offered him her assistance in descending the stairs—a kindness of which he stood much in need, for the strong man's head swam and he felt an indescribable feeling of remorse and despair stealing over him, which seemed to deprive him of all bodily energy. When alone with the good woman, he said huskily, as he pressed his forehead with his hands, 'How came she here? how much do you know?'

'I know all! When she first went supernumerary, my husband worked at the theatre as carpenter. I used to take his meals, and used to see her at rehearsals. Her youth and her being an orphan made me take to her, for I thought that perhaps my own child might come to that were I to die. I heard afterwards that she was married to an actor named Mortimer: I've seen her since on the streets. Now you see some of my acquaintances knew you to be once called Mortimer, from what you sometimes dropped in conversation with my husband, whom, thank God, you reclaimed. I made things out that way.'

'It was very kind of you to bring her here.'

‘ Sir, you would have done the same had you the same motives.’

‘ What were they?’

‘ A wish to show to a real benefactor and true friend that some of his kindness was not thrown away on rocky ground.’

‘ No higher motive, Mrs. Knighton?’

‘ Well, you know, sir,’ replied the woman, modestly, ‘ there is something said about the cup of cold water.’

‘ Thank God ! it has proved a cup of salvation, for she died in peace. The good and evil seed which I have sown in my life have borne fruit in your house, but the evil seems to have been overruled for good in this case,’ and he sighed deeply as he thought of Isabel.

Just then Miss Paris and Bessie entered the room, and so a reconciliation was effected.

When Hartley reached his lodgings that night, he found a letter there for him ; it was from Ned and ran thus :—

‘ DEAR HARRY.

‘ A discriminating public, and a wide-awake manager, having for some time past seen

and in some degree appreciated the histrionic powers of this Roscius, I am about to make my first bow to a London audience at a first-rate house, in a first-rate character. I enclose a number of free admissions, which I've obtained by hook or by crook, and have only to say that if properly distributed among some hard-handed fellows with wooden legs, that their applause would be worth having. Come yourself, old fellow, that is, if the piety dealers will let you, and see your old friend,

‘NED WEBB.’

‘P.S.—You can see me at the stage door. I don't owe any money, yet.’

‘Pile up the agony!’ exclaimed the spirit-broken man, as he finished reading this epistle. ‘Piety mongers, indeed!’ he ejaculated after a pause. ‘Ned, you mistake; it was I who traded in feeling, in truth, and in righteousness.’ Then he added, stamping his feet and running his hands through his hair, ‘Wavering fool that I was! why did I not pursue this one object? fame would have been mine now, and I should have been adamant, not the faint silly girl I now am.’

Well, what if he wears the mantle of a Garrick, it is but a filthy rag to the gown of a Paul. Chloroform for amputation, brandy is the narcotic when a mental dissection like mine is performed. Philosophy may say no, but the practice of the millions says yes. I must learn to think myself human. I've no spiritual stamina ; no moral strength to resist the pressure from without. I must drink since I cannot pray !' and he raised a bottle to his lips.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REACTION.

LONDON by night! What magic there is in these words for some young men! To how many do they hold a vague undefined notion of pleasure, in the form of midnight debauchery, drunken sprees, and rows with the police? 'We will have a night with you in London, old fellow, when we come up,' is almost the last thing country youths say to their fast town acquaintances, when they bid them adieu at the railway-station. 'Oh that I could stop out all night!' is the uppermost wish of many thousands of young men in the great City, who find their employers' rules too strict, or their parents' rules too hard for them to abide by. But there are other young men, both in town and country, who heartily wish that they had never so much as heard the words. A night in London; a night spent perhaps in roving the

streets, and becoming acquainted with the habits, manners, and customs of the peculiar people who are to be found in them from ten at night till five in the morning, the proper business-hours of sin. Those who have passed through the Devil's University, and taken honours thereat, know how much of their learning they acquired in the streets at this time. Some young old men would tremble if asked to coach a youth of seventeen, fresh from home, desirous of taking the initiative in these matters. They must be hardened indeed, if they felt no compunction when they thought of the exchanges he must make before his fast education could be considered finished. He has left home with the kisses of loving, innocent sisters fresh on his lips: he must exchange these for the gin-bought, brandy-bought, sherry-cobbler-purchased smiles of those who shame the sex to which those sisters belong! He must exchange the hearty, affectionate shake of a father's hand, and a mother's approving smile, for the slight touch of the two fingers of the judge at a judge-and-jury club, or the M.C. of a casino!

We cannot understand how an experienced night-prowler can talk of the glories of his

favourite pursuit, as if they were the only things worth living for. What a strange thing to live up to and keep caste in! How heroic to wrench knockers! how humanitarian to pull the doctor's night-bell, and fetch the wearied Escalapius from his warm bed, to listen to some trumped-up case of family affliction! how generous to treat the lowest prostitutes to coffee at a stall! how sublime to warm your fingers at the charcoal fire! how bold to upset the pot, and fight the man! and how humiliating to be locked up for the assault! Would that this were all: but there are many quack doctors in the land; there are hulks, prisons, and special-wards in hospitals; and their connection with such young men is much the same as that between seedtime and harvest.

There are some people who can never get so much intoxicated as to lose all sense of self. A person of this class can drink until his body reels and his vision becomes clouded; but his conscience will remain sober, and his imagination will only become more full of beautiful thoughts and ridiculous fancies than ever. We find the miserable man who has been the chief character in our story, in this condition, late one night,

about three weeks after the death of Emma, and a fortnight after her funeral, at which he had attended as chief mourner. And since he had taken this prominent part in the mournful ceremony, he had spent his days and nights in the most reckless dissipation; he had turned a deaf ear to the many expostulations of Sam Waters, to the kindly entreaties of Miss Paris; and had treated with indifference the little loving overtures of Bessie, who displayed her innocent affection for him in a thousand little ways. The only perceptible difference in his feelings towards the blue-eyed girl was, that he no longer avoided, but rather sought her society; and that on those intervals when his grief—which they all attributed in some way to something connected with Emma's death—was less violent, he would sit for hours and listen to her talk, which sounded like childish prattle to him; then she would lose sight of him for three or four days together; returning only more dejected and heartbroken than before.

He was staggering about from side to side of the roadway of a narrow London street, talking aloud, after his old custom—the custom generally of drunken men who have committed much to

memory, or who live sedentary lives. Muttering something which was quite unintelligible, he stopped suddenly before a hoarding covered with placards. A bill-sticker was honestly pasting a huge poster over a number of small bills. Hartley supported himself by a scaffold-pole, and seemed to watch the man's proceedings with considerable interest. The poster consisted of six pieces; two were already up, so that Hartley could read the words 'Theatre Royal——.'

Clinging tightly to the pole, he awaited the completion of the pasting operation, amusing himself by trying to sing snatches of a song, the first words of which are—

'I am Sammy Slap the bill-sticker,
And you must all agree, sir,
That I sticks to business like a brick
If business sticks to me, sir.'

'Go on, my hearty! sing away!' said the man; 'sing away! old son; you have got your load; I am blowed if you ain't! Good night, old fellow,' he added, as he picked up his tools and went on his way, for he had finished his work on the hoarding.

Hartley now took up a position which gave him a full view of the huge placard; and read

the following announcement with great difficulty, although the letters were of an extraordinary size :—

THEATRE ROYAL.

IMMENSE SUCCESS.

MR. M. V. LEICESTER'S EVERY NIGHT.

Free List suspended, public Press excepted.

‘Now let me die!’ exclaimed Hartley, as he threw himself on his knees in the gutter, ‘for old Ned has accomplished——’

Then lowering his tone, he went on muttering incoherently, after this fashion, as he vainly endeavoured to regain his perpendicular,—‘Great success; engagement of Miss Clinton; tickets for platform and cold collation three shillings; positively the last night of Senora Emilie; but she forgave me, so no more if you love me, Bessie.—Ah, ah, tickets for tea one shilling; the Rev. Mr. Hartley will address the meeting, and appear as the Baron Rosenthal on the same evening. Ah! ah! ah! it was a good game, but lost the court cards. I can’t get up—some undone widow sits upon my arm—no no, that’s not it; Oh that a man should put an enemy in his mouth, to steal away his brains; I wish it would: duller would I be than the rank weed that sleeps on

Lethe's wharf; and I can't—I can't; it will come again to-morrow!

By this time he had contrived to get into a sitting posture on the kerbstone, and leaning back against the boards which enclosed the pavement in front of the house, he cried aloud—

'Here I and sorrow sit! this is my throne, and kings must come to it!'

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour a considerable number of persons had assembled, none of whom offered Hartley any assistance, though, like all crowds collected by such a cause in London, they appeared to be greatly amused by what they seemed to consider his successful efforts for obtaining a covering of mud. They, however, by their numbers and their loud and boisterous exclamations of delight (evoked by the street chaff peculiar to Cockaigne, which was banded about from one to the other at the expense of the fallen man), attracted the notice of a policeman, who, raising him from the ground, asked him where he lived.

Hartley gave his address, at the same time asking the policeman to lock him up, it was such a long way to go, he said, pitifully.

‘ Well, I don’t want to do it if I can help it, cos you ain’t cheekey. Haven’t you got a brother or a sister about here? I’d take him there, you know, rather than lock him up,’ said the policeman, addressing a gentleman who was looking at Hartley with much interest.

‘ Where did he say he lived?’ inquired the gentleman.

The policeman repeated Hartley’s direction.

‘ Well, if you will fetch a cab, any of you, I’ll take the young man home,’ said Mr. Wilson, for it was he.

‘ Bedad I’ll fetch yer honor a cab, as sure as my name is Phil Shaughnessy. Heaven bless yer honor.’ And off he went, followed by half a dozen others.

The cab was soon fetched, and Hartley, who had recognised his friend’s voice, entered it without uttering a word or offering the slightest resistance.

‘ If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one,’ thought his friend as he took a seat beside him.

* * * * *

Scene—A chamber darkened, a sick man lying

T

on a couch, a lovely maiden and her elderly friend standing near him discovered.

‘Hush! I thought I heard him speak, Bessie.’ The lovely girl moved on tiptoe to the bedside and listened.

‘Where am I?’ asked the patient in a feeble voice.

‘With friends, Harry, but you must not speak.’

‘How long have I been here?’

‘Three weeks.’

‘Who brought me here?’

‘Mr. Wilson.’

‘Ah! you are Bessie. Affection and kindness always.’

He was again unconscious.

Miss Paris smiled with inward satisfaction. Bessie knelt at her friend’s feet, and taking her hand in hers, she gently murmured, ‘I am so happy now, teacher dear, our prayers are answered.’ There were tears too.

* * * * *

‘Well, have you thought of what I said to you?’

‘Yes, sir,’ said Hartley, in reply to his friend’s question.

‘ And will you really devote your talents—I mean your pen, your voice, and your prayers,—to the greatest object of philanthropic effort?’

‘ I will, God giving me strength.’

‘ You make me happy to hear you say so. I did not ask you to do this while you were ill. I’ve waited for your recovery because I know that men promise anything when the body is weak and death seems near, but I put a great faith in the sayings of a strong healthy man, and you have promised to imitate Him who went about doing good.’

‘ Yes, my dear friend, I will, as you say, remain a workman while it seems to be God’s will that I should do so. I need not tell you how I can see that I had fallen a victim to intellectuality; how human reason and human learning had become my gods. I have indeed laboured for that which is not bread.’

‘ Become then, dear brother, a follower of Him who bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and enter into the companionship of those who labour and pray that they may do the work which our Father has given us to do in this London of ours; become one of those who, setting aside every

human standard of excellence and importance, measure all men by their moral worth, while endeavouring to lead them into communion with Christ the Man, the only begotten Son of the Eternal Lord.'

' May God give me grace to do this !' replied Hartley, fervently and slowly.

' Amen, say I, for both of us,' said Mr. Wilson.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

WE anticipate such questions as these, and answer them at once : Did Isabel Clinton marry ? Yes. Who did she marry ? Charles Leclerq. Where did he propose ? In the cabin of his fairy yacht, far away on the blue Mediterranean. Did they marry in Italy ? No, at the old church of Etheridge, all ivy-grown outside, and high covered pews inside ; old dean, old rector, old perpetual curate, old beadle, old sexton, and young bell-ringers. Did Mrs. Cleveland alter her opinions about the peculiar people ? O dear no, but she has admitted that God made the sun to shine on all, and she thinks that people can shut his rays out of a room if they desire, and remain in it without warmth or light, but she does not reason by analogy.

Ned Webb, *alias* Montague Villiers Leicester,

still continues to be a great favourite before and behind the curtain. He has been told by somebody that his influence over Harry was at one time baneful to Miss Cleveland's happiness, so he wrote a cheque on his banker for one hundred pounds, and placed it between the title-page and the fly-leaf of a very handsome Bible, which formed one of many handsome presents which that young lady received a week or so before she was married. He also told Harry, in the strict confidence of the most sincere friendship, that he would give the charming little Methodist away, adding that if he could only meet with such a girl—well, no matter—Madame Squallididi would stand no chance whatever.

Mr. Wilson still continues to work out his plan of social improvement, founded as it is on the teaching of One who has left us his holy example as well as his incomparable system of social ethics for our guide. He finds in Hartley a most devoted assistant.

Miss Cleveland became Mrs. Hartley, of course. Ned Webb was great as master of the ceremonies on the happy occasion. Being determined, he said, to put the whole thing on the stage, regardless of

expense, he omitted nothing calculated to give *éclat* to the proceedings, even to the writing of a newspaper paragraph, which, in his usual clever way, he contrived to get inserted. It was something like this: 'On Wednesday last, at the parish church of —, by the Rev. —, Mr. Henry Hartley was united to Miss Cleveland, ward of the eminent comedian, M. V. Leicester, that gentleman giving the lovely bride away. After the solemnization of the holy rite, the happy air left town immediately for Hastings, Mr. Leicester remaining in town to fulfil his engagements.'

THE END.

H. LEA, WARWICK LANE.

Permit us to bring to your notice a *Familiar History of India*, from the pen of Mr. STOCQUELER, the author of the "Hand-Book of British India," designed chiefly for the use of colleges and schools. This little work has long been deemed a great necessity; and the testimony which is borne by the public press to the manner in which Mr. Stocqueler has executed his self-imposed task would, we should hope, commend the "Familiar History" to your patronage.

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"We have an idea that the 'History of British India,' published very long ago by Mr. Charles Knight, was, up to its date, about the best extant. The progress of time and the march of events rendered a supplementary history necessary, and Mr. Stocqueler, a competent man enough, has written a very compact book on the subject for the use of colleges and schools. It is conscientiously what it purports to be, and for that reason possesses intrinsically a rational and appreciable value."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

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